

SCOTLAND'S STORY

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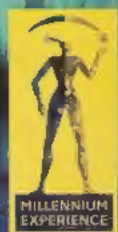
**The rise of the
Highland clans**

**Gaelic king who
went to war to
save a culture**

**Fighting men
of the cloth**

**When Wembley
was England's
field of tears**

**Orkney sagas
tell our history**




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ATLANTIC
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1130

Somerled emerges as a real force in the Kingdom of the Isles, using seapower to great effect.



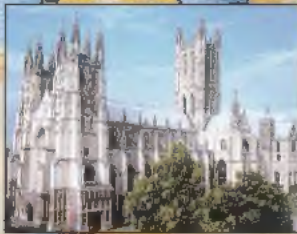
1164

Somerled dies in his last foray against Malcolm IV. After the battle at Renfrew his head is presented to the Bishop of Glasgow.



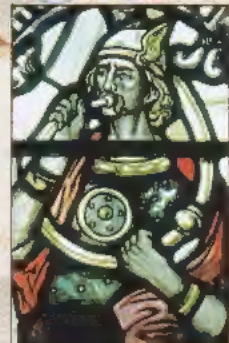
1189

The Pope makes the Scottish Church a 'special daughter of Rome,' freeing it from the influence of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.



1266

Treaty of Perth gives the Scottish King control of Western Isles and removes threat of invasion from Norway.



1263

Norwegian King Haakon retreats in disarray after the Battle of Largs.



1296

Glasgow Bishop Robert Wishart joins Robert the Bruce to raise the standard of revolt against Edward I



1286

Alexander III dies a mysterious death on his way to visit his new Queen at Kinghorn.



1306

Bishop Wishart absolves Robert the Bruce of the murder of John Comyn, paving the way for his kingship.



1689

Dukeld is left a blazing ruin with its magnificent cathedral destroyed, in the aftermath of the battle of Killiecrankie.



In Part 10:
The truth about William Wallace

PART OF
IRELAND

North
Channel

PART
ENGLA



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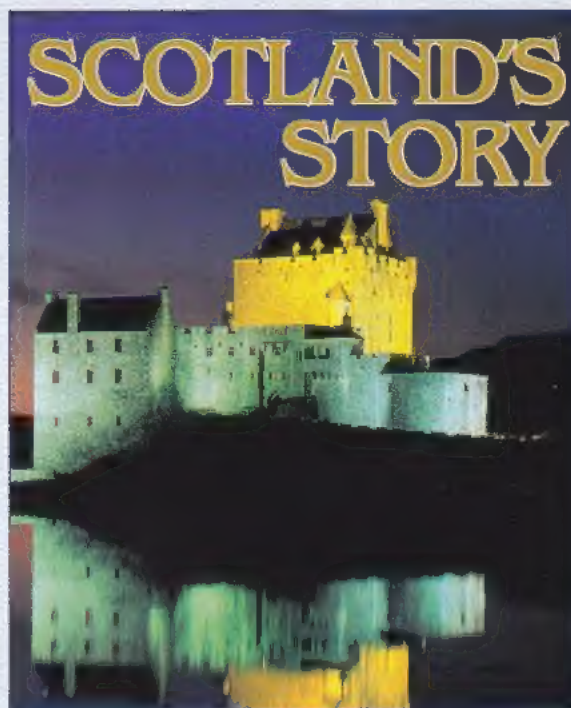
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COMMENT



COVER: Clan country. Eilean Donan Castle, whose hereditary Constables were the Macraes. The Royal Navy bombarded Jacobite defenders there in the 1715 rising.

Patriots who writ their names large

Larger than life is the only way to describe two of the characters who stamped their personalities on 12th century Scotland.

One was Somerled, the Gaelic/Viking warrior king who took on the might of Malcolm IV and his Norman knights.

Somerled fought not just for his Kingdom of the Isles, but against the foreign influences introduced by David I and Malcolm.

The other character, one of our great unsung patriots, was Bishop Robert Wishart of Glasgow Cathedral.

He was a key player in the Church's war of independence, personally faced down Edward I, and stood by Robert the Bruce in his darkest hour.

He was so committed to an independent Scotland he built siege guns with timber from the Cathedral.

Wishart and Somerled are classic examples of the wonderful characters who enrich our history.

Historians have to rely on the unlikeliest of sources to help them reconstruct the past.

None more so than the Orkneyinga Sagas, the rich heritage

of the Earls of Orkney, passed down from mouth to mouth until they were eventually committed to vellum.

The sagas provide an unrivalled picture of Scottish life from the 9th to 12th centuries.

They recount the heroic deeds of Vikings with exotic names like Ketil Flatnose, Magnus Barelegs and Aud the Deep-minded.

Small wonder their names were passed from generation to generation and stood the test of time.

Few aspects of Scottish life have been so misrepresented by history as the society of the clans.

A whole industry has evolved, peddling a tartan and shortbread tin image which is no more than an elaborate myth.

The clan system was strongly based on family ties, bonded by economic and military necessity.

But the origins of the individual clans are as varied as the patterns of the tartans they sport.

The clans were a force to reckon with from the earliest days of Somerled, forefather of the MacDonalds, to the beginning of the end on Culloden's tear-stained and bloody field.



The man who would be king

He was already a powerful figure, standing like a giant over the north-western seaboard. But when Somerled, King of the Isles, took 160 ships up the Clyde to further his national ambitions, it turned out to be a fatal move

Somerled, King of the Isles, was feared and revered in equal measure in the 12th century, during which time he stood like a giant over Scotland's entire north-western seaboard.

For many, his name has retained an almost mythical quality, while others have sought to portray him as an unruly rogue. In fact, he campaigned to defend the Scots kingship and government from what many saw as destructive foreign influences acting on kings David I and Malcolm IV.

Somerled's kingship was in the heart of the ancient and distinctively Scottish Viking-Gael land, and he himself had Gaelic and Norse origins. His name in Gaelic, Somhairlidh, comes from the Norse *sumarlidi* meaning 'summer-raider' or Viking, and his family was firmly among the ruling Celto-Norse chieftains of the Western Isles in the 11th and 12th centuries.

Little is known about his early life, but by the 1130s Somerled had emerged as an important political figure. His royal titles were Ri Innse Gall, 'King of the Hebrides' and Regulus (or 'Kinglet') of Argyll.

Although Somerled owed traditional allegiance to the Kings of Scots and Norway, he was fiercely independent of both. He established through marriage a network of relations with the most influential figures of the community of the Western Isles. The scope of this Atlantic community encompassed Man, Ireland, the Hebrides, the Orkneys, and Norway.

Political alliances were also cultivated through fosterage and the giving of hostages. These were a means of building up trust and friendly cooperation.

In 1140, when Somerled married Ragnhild, daughter of Olaf of Man, he already had forces of some strength. Sources state that even before this marriage, Somerled had taken Lorn, Argyll, Kintyre and Knapdale, Mull and Morvern.

The connections established with big political players like Olaf of

Man and Harold Maddadsson, earl of Orkney, enabled Somerled to emerge as the key political figure in the Isles by the 1150s.

His alliances provided him with a potentially vast army of supporters from which to draw in the event of confrontation with the Scots crown.

Such ties were further enhanced by the cultural distinctiveness of the region, a factor which might well have acted to unite the native barons when in conflict with the crown.

It was essential for Somerled to be a sophisticated political operator. The Isles and the mainland formed two very distinct spheres of influence which had to be balanced carefully if he was to consolidate his power.

In the Isles, Somerled had to deal with a powerful tyrant on his southern frontier, Godrafraidh or Godred. Godred was Lord of Man and the Isles whose aggressive conduct unsettled many of his local chieftains.

Around 1156, one such chieftain, Thorfinn MacOttar, sought help from Somerled – who seized the opportunity to establish himself further. Another chieftain named Paul managed to warn Godred, who assembled a fleet of ships and confronted Somerled on the night of the Epiphany that year. The engagement resulted in a two-year truce, brought to an end when the two clashed again in 1158.

This time, Somerled sailed to Man with a fleet of 53 warships and put Godred to flight.

Somerled's mainland centre of power was Argyll. His greatest concern was the Scots kingship's policy of thrusting foreign Anglo-Norman settlers westward.

These settlers were a key part of the policy of King David I, and especially Malcolm IV, to replace Gaelic government and society with the Anglo-Norman model of feudalism.

But Somerled knew he couldn't fight on two fronts at the same time. When engaged in warfare in the Isles, his relations with the Scottish Crown were peaceable. And when he took-on the King of Scots, he first ►

■ LEFT: The severed head of Somerled is delivered on a plate to the Bishop of Glasgow, Herbert, as a reward to him for bringing the spirit of St Kentigern to aid Walter fitz Alan.

■ RIGHT: West Highland carved grave slab showing typical Somerled fighting man.



They kept fighting in the family

After Somerled's death, the power of his family continued, though they split his territory in three. His son Dubhghall took the lands in Argyll, while the two sons of Ragnall, son of Somerled, took Garmoran (Ruairi) and Islay (Domnall).

Ragnall was the equal of his father in ambition. He founded a Benedictine monastery on Iona in the face of the opposition of Irish clergy, and brought independence and prosperity back to the island monastery.

He also founded a nunnery there (its ruins are pictured below) and his sister, Bethag, was its first prioress.

The wealth of the Iona nuns can be seen in a collection of four silver spoons from the early 13th century (two pictured above) found in the ruins of the nunnery.

What gave power to this family was control of the seas in their strong galleys, and their strategic fortified castles ringing their territory.

But disagreements among the three family strands descended from Somerled meant that the following two centuries brought much in-fighting and rivalry.

It was in the aftermath of the Wars of Independence that one of these families – Clann Domhnaill, based in Islay – would reap the rewards of their rivals' infertility and misjudgment, reclaim and regroup all Somerled's lands, and go on to expand their power, as the later Medieval Lords of the Isles.



■ Saddell Abbey, founded by Somerled as he promoted the new-model European order, the Cistercians.

ensured that the Isles were at peace. He also recognised that cultivating his links with the church were crucial if he was to extend his influence. So he gave patronage to a new-model European religious order, the Cistercians, founding Saddell Abbey in Argyll.

He even tried to tempt the Abbot of Derry, who was head of the Columban monasteries in Ireland, back to Iona. Had he succeeded, it would have been a political masterstroke.

Thus the kings of Scots were not alone in following modern trends and appreciating the political importance of the church.

Although Somerled supported King David I in conflict against the English, he was never David I's vassal or underlord as many historians have asserted.

The relationship between the two was a Gaelic one in which Somerled paid a tribute to David that was little more than an expression of tradition. The feudal concept of vassalage was simply not recognised by Somerled and he governed his province with a high degree of independence.

And David had little choice in the matter of Somerled's meteoric rise to power in the Isles.

David's involvement in English affairs from 1136 meant that he was unable to check Somerled's activities in the Hebrides. It is precisely at the time that David's back was turned that Somerled was busy expanding his power.

With the death of David I in 1153, the divide over the issue of Anglo-Norman influence in Scotland was ripped wide open.

While many of Scotland's magnates had grown increasingly unhappy at David I's Anglo-Norman influences, the crowning of Malcolm IV under the Anglo-Norman system of succession outraged them.

David had chosen his son Henry as his heir apparent, as some of his charters make clear. Henry's death, however, meant that the crown then passed to David's grandson, Malcolm.

This foreign system of succession broke Scotland's ancient Gaelic rules. Further aggravating the situation was the fact that Malcolm had not yet reached the age of majority,

and was wide-open to manipulation by the Anglo-Normans.

Somerled responded to the threat by attempting to remove Malcolm IV. Somerled's brother-in-law, Malcolm MacHeth, had a claim to the throne through the Gaelic system of succession, and Somerled rebelled with MacHeth's sons, probably in support of their father's claim to the throne.

The underlying motive was to weaken Anglo-Norman influence in Scotland. This rising resulted in a dispute between the kingship of the Isles and the Scottish throne, which eventually ended in truce in 1159.

Crucially, Somerled was not alone in leading uprisings against the kings of Scots. There were several other rebellions throughout the period 1120-1160, as discontent was rife among Scotland's semi-independent lords.

The native Scottish lords were furious at Malcolm's neglect of his kingdom and felt threatened by his Anglo-Norman barons, who



■ Contemporary image of raiding war galley.

were hungry to carve up the native territories between them. Above all, Malcolm's intimacy and friendship with king Henry I of England aggravated them greatly.

In response to continued alienation and suppression by Malcolm IV, Somerled headed another invasion of the kingship in 1164. Tensions had grown higher than ever, and he and his allies were desperate to reverse the foreign culture being imposed by the kingship.

According to the 'Chronicle of Man', Somerled assembled a vast fleet of 160 ships and sailed up the Clyde, landing at Renfrew with a considerable body of men. The later historian George Buchanan believed that on this occasion, Somerled was motivated by hopes of achieving the kingship of the Scots himself.

Nothing shows Somerled's personal alienation better than the place he chose to stage the invasion – Renfrew, a great Strathclyde fief held by the most powerful of Anglo-Norman barons, Walter fitz Alan.

We can only speculate about the engagement, but some historians have said there would be a certain historic satisfaction had Somerled and fitz Alan faced one another on the field at Renfrew.

Also symbolic was the intrusive presence of the Anglo-Norman castle built at Renfrew.

Somerled met his end during this attempted coup, but the events surrounding his death are clouded in obscurity.

There are two conflicting versions of what happened. Pro-Malcolm sources say that there was a huge battle in which Somerled was killed and his forces routed. But others suggest that Somerled's death was a more macabre affair, steeped in treachery and political intrigue.

They record that Somerled was assassinated by his nephew, or page, Maurice MacNeill, who had been bribed by the Anglo-Normans. It is said that Maurice took a little boat, went over the river at Paisley, and sought a private audience with Somerled – whom he then stabbed before making his escape.

There need not be any great contradiction here. If there was a battle, it may have raged on over days,



■ The King of the Isles' stronghold in his watery element: Dunyvaig Castle on Islay.

and Maurice could have arranged a fake diplomatic meeting with Somerled during a lull in the fighting. Whatever the cause of Somerled's death, without its leader, the rising collapsed.

According to the Chronicles of St Kentigern, Somerled's head was delivered on a plate to the Bishop of Glasgow, Herbert, as a reward for bringing the spirit of St Kentigern to the aid of Walter fitz Alan – the first of the Stewarts. The Bishop and his largely Anglo-Norman clergy attributed the victory to Kentigern.

They also suggested the victory was the work of the Scottish saints in general, proclaiming that "the Scottish saints are truly to be praised!" This claim ignored the fact that most of Somerled's people lived in the heartland of the early Scottish saints.

Somerled's extraordinary life shows that the feudalisation of Scotland was anything but peaceful. Tensions in 12th-century Scotland ran high between natives and newcomers. Many of the Gaelic magnates under David I and Malcolm IV were torn between their Gaelic instincts and their loyalty to the Scottish crown.

Modern Scots might reflect carefully on the rise and fall of Somerled. The Gaelic culture which gives our nation a distinctive flavour is now more a part of our past than our present, and received the first of many crushing blows with Somerled's defeat.

David and Malcolm's feudalisation may have brought progress of a sort, but it was at a high price. ●

TIMELINE

1140

Somerled marries Ragnhild, the daughter of the King of Man, creating a powerful alliance.

1153

The death of David, King of Scots, and Olaf of Man gives Somerled the opportunity to further expand his power.

1156

Somerled forces the Lord of Man to give him Kintyre, Islay, Jura, Mull, the Uists, Barra and the Small isles.

1158

Somerled sails to Man and drives out the Lord of Man.

1159

Somerled and his brother-in-law Malcolm MacHeth rebel against Malcolm IV.

1164

Somerled's invasion force of 160 ships lands in Renfrew. Either in battle or by intrigue, Somerled is slain.

1200

Ragnhild, son of Somerled, founds Iona's Benedictine Monastery. Bethag, daughter of Somerled, becomes first prioress of the nunnery.

The final scene

The manner of Somerled's death has never been definitely established, but it is described graphically in a poem written at the time by a cleric of Glasgow Cathedral:

The deadly leader, Somerled, died. In the first great clash of arms.

He fell wounded by a spear and cut down by the sword;

Their savage leader now laid low, the wicked turned and ran.

But many of them were butchered in the sea as on dry land.

They sought to clamber from the blood-red waves into their ships,

But were drowned, each and all, in the surging tide.



■ Rothesay Castle: perhaps built by Walter fitz Alan to protect Scotland's west coast

The fighting men

No blood was shed in Scotland's other war of independence. It was a war of words waged by leading bishops. But it was crucial in the epic struggle to defy the 'Hammer of the Scots'

Wallace and Bruce were not the first to fight for Scottish independence. There was an earlier war which was also crucial for Scotland's future. But in this one there was no bloodshed. It was a war of words, of legal debate about the freedom of the Scottish Church. It lasted from 1101 to 1189, when English ambitions were finally thwarted.

This was the time when the Papacy succeeded as never before in asserting its authority over the church as a whole. This meant a clear 'chain of command' had to be firmed up. Archbishops had authority over bishops who controlled priests. Before this period archbishops did not hold much sway over bishops. In fact, there were areas – like Scotland – where there was no archbishop recognised by the Pope. In practice the Bishop of St Andrews probably had some authority over most bishops in Scotland – though not the Bishop of Glasgow, whose official title, until 1297, was 'Bishop of Scots'.

Both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York claimed they should control Scotland in this new, firmed-up chain of authority. But the kings of Scots and successive bishops of St Andrews and Glasgow steadfastly refused.

To begin with, the Papacy supported York. The first surviving papal letter to Scotland, sent in December 1101, is an instruction to Scottish bishops to obey their new archbishop in York. This provoked a proud response from St Andrews, which stated that it was the Archbishopric of Scotland already.

Attempts were made in 1126 and 1157 to have this recognised by the Papacy, but they failed. Meanwhile, the bishops of St Andrews and Glasgow suffered intense pressure from York and the Papacy, but they would not yield an inch. The

position suddenly changed, however, after the King of England was implicated in the murder of Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1170. The Papacy did not want the English king, who effectively appointed archbishops of York, to have any control over Scotland.

First Glasgow's independence was recognised in 1176, and then the independence of all Scottish bishops (except Galloway) was recognised in 1189. But the Pope did not go the whole hog of appointing an archbishop. Instead, each of the nine Scottish bishops (later 10) was under the Pope 'without an intermediary', and the Scottish church as a whole was termed the 'special daughter' of Rome.

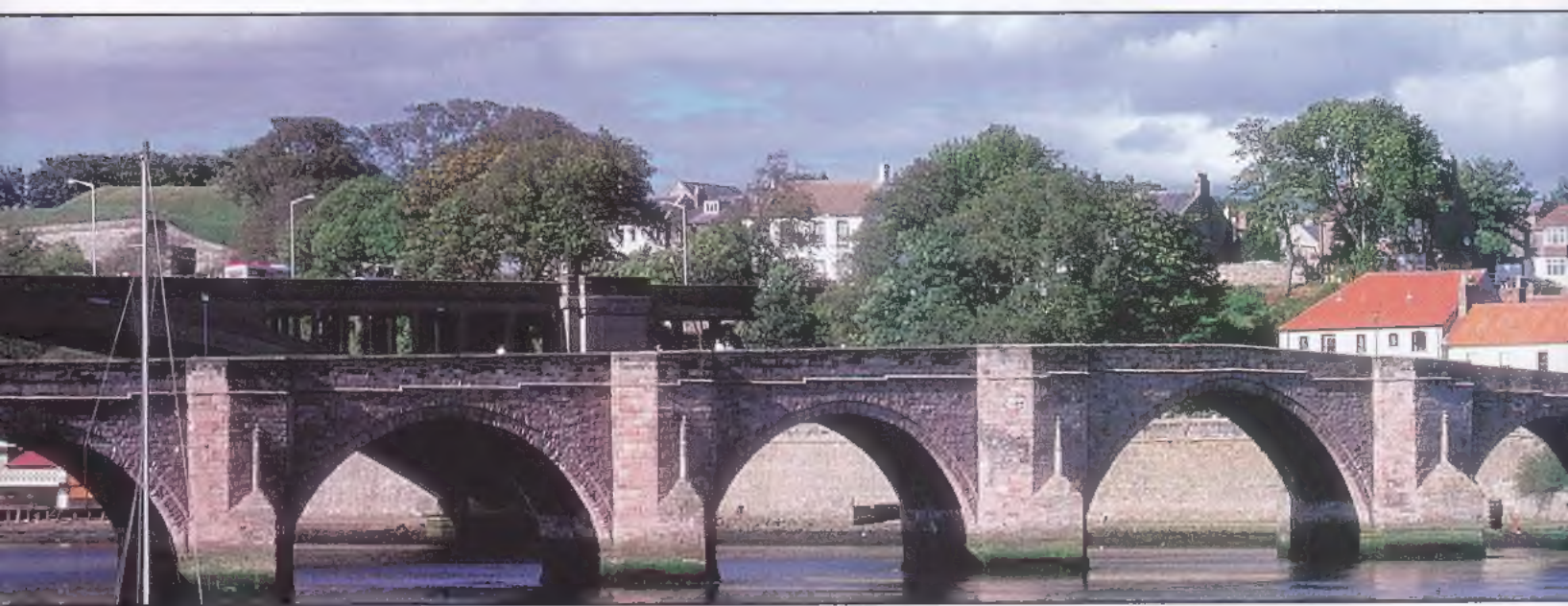
The determination of the leading Scottish bishops, William Lamberton of St Andrews and Robert Wishart of Glasgow, to preserve Scottish independence was also crucial to the struggle against Edward I.

The most colourful of the two was Wishart (in office 1273-1316). He was a prisoner in Winchester from 1306 to 1308 and, despite his age and position, was thrown into a dungeon and kept in irons. He was only finally released in the exchange of prisoners after Bannockburn.

When Wishart was captured, Edward I wrote to the English commander in Scotland to say he was almost as pleased as if Bruce himself had been taken. Edward was tempted to have Wishart killed, and his life was spared only because Edward knew that killing a bishop would be regarded as despicable, not just by the Pope but by Latin Christendom at large.

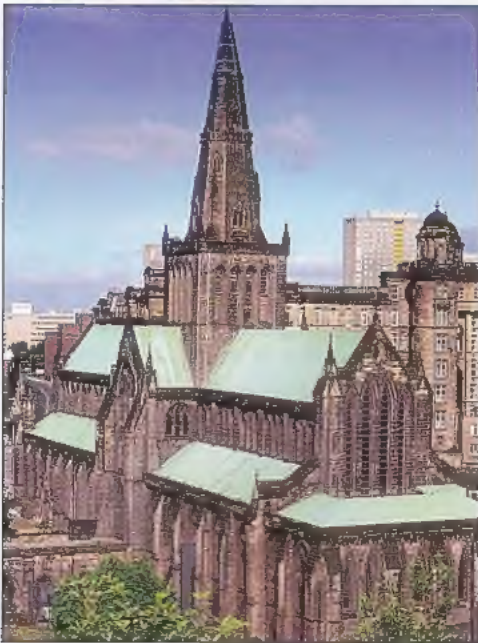
Wishart was a persistent thorn in Edward's flesh for as long as Edward tried to take over Scotland. This began not on the battlefield, but five years before the outbreak of war in 1296. The death of the last member of the Scottish royal

■ **Berwick:** When news of Bruce's bid for the crown reached Scotland's premier churchman Bishop Lamberton here in 1306, he immediately slipped his guards and made his way to Scone to play his traditional role in the king's inauguration.



of the cloth

Architect of independence



■ Glasgow Cathedral – whose Bishop Robert Wishart was a hero of the independence fight.

family in September, 1290, led to a brief civil war between the two claimants to the throne, Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale – grandfather of the future king – and John Balliol, Lord of Galloway.

Peace was restored when Edward I was invited to arbitrate as a friendly neighbour. When Edward finally arrived at the Border in May, 1291, however, he declared that he came not as a friendly neighbour but as overlord of Scotland. It was Robert Wishart who stood up and told Edward to his face that Scotland was an independent realm.

The next week was spent in desperate negotiations in which the Scots, led by Wishart, countered every move of Edward's to outflank

them. In the end, Edward had to make do with agreeing to temporary possession of Scotland's castles until a king was chosen.

Wishart next came to the fore at another moment of crisis. Edward I had conquered Scotland in 1296 and taken almost all the ruling elite as prisoners to England. But the oppressive demands of the government of occupation had led to grass-roots revolts breaking out across the land. At this point Wishart raised the standard of revolt at Irvine with Robert Bruce (the future king) and James Stewart.

This was a political rather than a military manoeuvre, and bought time for William Wallace and Andrew Moray to co-ordinate the rising which led to the dramatic victory at Stirling Bridge in September, 1297.

Wishart's friendship with Robert Bruce proved crucial when both men took their greatest risk to restore Scottish independence. The cause seemed hopeless. Edward I's second military conquest was effectively secured in February, 1304, when John Comyn and his government, who had held out bravely in the name of the absent King John Balliol, finally surrendered. Two years later John Comyn himself was dead, assassinated by Robert Bruce in the Church of the Blackfriars in Dumfries.

This left Bruce with no option but to go for broke and claim the throne for himself. But he needed support desperately. It was bad enough asking people to help Bruce usurp the throne, but they were also being asked to back a sacrilegious killer who was now the mortal enemy of the Comyns, Scotland's most powerful family.

Wishart was the first leading figure to stand by Bruce in this desperate hour. He not only absolved Robert for his sins. He also handed the royal banner, which he had kept safe, to Bruce and urged him to become king of an independent Scotland. Wishart himself prepared for war by ►

Scots churchman Master Baldred Bisset played a major role in the Wars of Independence by establishing Scotland's independence at the Papacy, which was the United Nations of Medieval times.

In 1299 Pope Boniface VIII wrote to Edward I, complaining about the English invasion of 'Rome's special daughter'. This meant that Scotland's independence would have to be debated before the Pope. The Scots sent Bisset to advocate their case.

A university-trained lawyer, hence the title Master, he had held the rich parsonage of Kinghorn in Fife, until he was deprived of it by Edward I.

He was accompanied by Master William of Eaglesham and Master William of Frere, and together the Scots legal team made a very favourable impression in Rome in 1301.

Edward's case for English supremacy was based on his reading of ancient origin myths and that legally the Scots were his vassals.

Baldred's rebuttal survives in his advocate's brief, the processus, which is one of the first histories of the Scots ever produced.

Drawing on Gaelic origin myths, a sign of how important Gaelic traditions were, he said that all Scots were descended from Scota, the Pharaoh's daughter, and that the Scots had in turn created Scotland. His argument was that Scotland and England had different 'historical' origins.

That left the legal point of vassalage. Baldred pointed out that thanks to the Scottish Church's independence as Rome's 'special daughter', and due to the status of St Andrew, they enjoyed papal suzerainty and protection. Effectively that placed some Scottish sovereignty with the Pope and not Edward.

He also argued that Edward's claim to overlordship was void, because William the Lion's oath in 1174 had been under duress – the kind of oath the Pope had already absolved the Scots from – and that, anyway, Richard the Lionheart had in 1189 renounced any rights over Scotland.

Bisset won the argument, but failed to resolve the issue because Edward defied the Pope and refused to put his case before Rome.



Along with their key role in diplomacy, a few of the bishops even took up arms



■ The archbishops of both Canterbury (above) and York claimed supremacy over Scotland.

► instructing that siege engines should be built from timber which Edward himself had donated to Glasgow Cathedral for the repair of a belfry.

At this point Scotland's premier bishop, Lamberton of St Andrews, quickly rallied to Bruce's cause according to a pre-arranged plan.

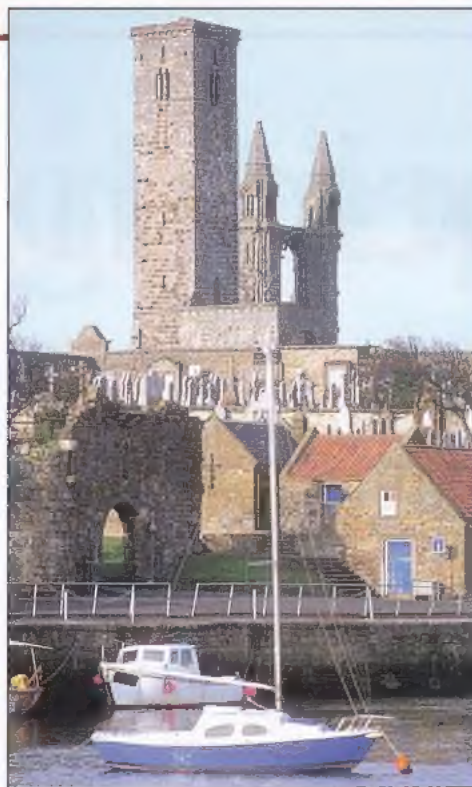
One of Wallace's most important achievements when he governed Scotland (1297-8) was to secure Lamberton's appointment. Previously he was chancellor of Glasgow Cathedral, so he must have known Wishart well. Lamberton was a strong supporter of King John Balliol, who by then was a prisoner of the English. No-one knew that Balliol was never to return, and the cause of Scottish independence was fought in the name of King John until 1304.

Wallace's immediate legacy was that most of Scotland remained free from English control until 1303-4, and in this period Lamberton acted as guardian of the realm, first with John Comyn and Robert Bruce, and then on his own, until 1301.

Whereas Robert Wishart comes across as a dynamic figure who relished a crisis and was quite prepared to face up to Edward in person, the impression you get of William Lamberton is of a politician with a quiet, steely determination. He was not going to give up all hope just because Scottish resistance had finally been broken in 1304.

Edward completed his conquest by besieging Stirling Castle which refused to capitulate. Edward arranged for his court to witness his final triumph by erecting a pavilion so they could view proceedings in comfort. Little did he know that beneath the din of the siege engines Bishop Lamberton and Robert Bruce, who were meant to be supporting Edward, hatched a plan that Robert should one day seize the throne.

When news of Bruce's bid for the crown in 1306 reached Lamberton in Berwick, he slipped his guards and made his way to Scone, where he played his traditional role in Robert's inauguration as king. He was captured soon



■ Scotland's premier bishop, Lamberton of St Andrews – above – rallied to Bruce's cause.

afterwards and, like Wishart, was imprisoned in irons. Lamberton lived on until 1328, and presided at the magnificent ceremony of thanksgiving for Scotland's survival when St Andrews Cathedral was consecrated in 1318.

Wishart and Lamberton were not the only heroic churchmen. Many played a key role in diplomacy, in politics at home, and maintaining morale. A few of the bishops even took up arms.

Bishop Sinclair of Dunkeld is famous for leading the troops who defeated an English invasion of Fife. Another impressive figure was Baldred Bisset, professor of law at Bologna and chief Scottish procurator at the Papacy.

As before in 1101-1189, the Papacy was the scene of a battle of words for Scotland's independence. Baldred's eloquent logic in his case against Edward I can still be read today. The war was won not only by the unflinching self-belief of fighters like Wallace and Bruce, but also of academics and clergy such as Bisset, Lamberton, Sinclair, Wishart, and many more besides. ●

TIMELINE

1101

Pope orders Scots bishops to obey Archbishop of York. They refuse.

1126

David I tries to get St Andrews made into archbishopric for Scotland.

1176

Bishop of Glasgow recognised as independent from England.

1189

Independence of Scottish Church is recognised as Scotland becomes 'Rome's special daughter'.

1291

Robert Wishart, bishop of Glasgow, tells Edward I to his face that Scotland is independent of him.

1296

Wishart and Robert Bruce raise standard of revolt at Irvine.

1297-8

Wallace achieves appointment of Lamberton to St Andrews bishopric.

1306-8

Edward I captures and keeps Wishart prisoner in Winchester.

1316

Bishop Wishart dies and is buried in Glasgow Cathedral.

1318

Lamberton presides over St Andrews Cathedral opening.

Where to visit Bishop Wishart

There is an effigy reputed to be that of Bishop Wishart – the recumbent figure of a man in bishop's robes – that may be studied and admired in Glasgow Cathedral, which is reckoned to be the site of his burial.

How to find the figure:

It is located at the east end of the building, in the Lower church, which is often loosely and

inaccurately referred to as 'the crypt'. In this area there are four open chapels with low walls, and the effigy is to be found between the chapel of St Peter and St Paul and that of St Andrew.

Should you wish to pay your respects to Scotland's conspicuously heroic churchman, the opening hours are 9.30pm to 4pm Monday to Saturday; and on Sundays from 2pm to 4pm.



Family ties made the clans a world force



■ Most clans had impressive strongholds from which they grew. The MacLeods, for instance, built the impressive Dunvegan Castle in Skye.

What was the clan and how was it born?

There is a lot more to this ancient social system than you might guess from looking at the tartan on a shortbread tin

An apparent paradox which fascinates historians is why modern Scotland chooses to wear an exclusively Highland face. From the middle of the 18th century onwards, and at the same time as the real Highlands were being devastated by capitalism and the Clearances, Highland symbols became central to the remaking of Scottish identity.

Whisky, Highland cattle, the bagpipe, the 'bens and glens' and tartan are all there in the mirror in which we Scots see ourselves, and in which others see us.

Another essential feature of this identikit portrait is the clan system. Rural democracies bedecked in the same tartan and living in Utopian

bliss among their mountain fastnesses; ruthless war machines roused by the sending round of the fiery cross to attack neighbours in the next glen, or cross the 'Highland line' to seek rich pickings in the Lowlands, or to die for Bonnie Prince Charlie – an ancient social system which survived intact until put to the sword at Culloden in 1746.

This is the myth of the clans and, like all myths, it refuses to die. For some people the clans colour all Scottish history, whether Highland or Lowland. For others, they still exist.

In *Braveheart* the Wallaces of Ayrshire are a tartan-clad clan living in a glen just like their 'neighbours' the MacGregors. Never mind that the MacGregors hailed from North Argyll and ►



■ Loch Lomond: home to three kindreds – MacFarlanes, Buchanans and McAuleys – who branched off from the ruling family of the earldom of Lennox

► had not yet come into being in William Wallace's time. The Scottish genealogical circuit at home, and the expatriate diaspora abroad, continue to be organised along clan lines. Never mind that after 300 years of cultural alienation, much of it self-induced, the 'clan-chiefs' who inhabit this world are more at home in Kensington than in Kinlochailort, and would be unrecognisable and untelligible to their ancestors.

The clans began their slide to oblivion in the 17th century, and the process was complete by 1800. They have been sustained down to the present day through an ever-increasing fiction,

the more farcical aspects of which make clans an easy subject to ridicule. Yet they are too important to ignore.

What of the word itself? Clan is a borrowing of the Gaelic *clann*. The primary meaning in Gaelic has always been 'children', but between roughly the 11th and 16th centuries, it developed a technical, secondary meaning of 'kindred'. Before the 11th century the corresponding term was *cenel*, and by the 16th century there are signs that *clann* itself was beginning to be replaced by *cinneadh*. So although to us the word 'clan' is

endowed with a magical quality, it simply reflects one phase in the development of the kinship-based society of Gaelic Scotland and Ireland.

Perhaps the earliest Scottish instance of a kindred, which employed the new terminology of which *clann* was a part, was Clann Duib (Clan Duff). They were the ruling family of the province or earldom of Fife, whose head or chief was responsible for enthroning the king of Scots in the middle ages. Shakespeare has made us all familiar with the MacDuff who was supposedly 'from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd', and who supported the future Malcolm III (Malcolm Canmore) against MacBeth.

MacDuff here represents not a forename, but Gaelic MacDuib, the style used by the head of the clan. The third and final element in the new naming system was the surname, which was identical to the style.

'Mac' surnames still dominate Scottish phone books, a true legacy of the age of the clans. The fact that we find one of the earliest clans in Fife, an area we would not now think of as Gaelic or Highland, reminds us that, down to around 1100, much of what is now Lowland Scotland was experiencing Gaelicisation. Wherever Gaelic went, clans followed. Before 1100 we hear of two clans, the mysterious Clann Chanann and Clann Morgainn, in the north-east, which like Fife was formerly Pictish territory. The Galbraiths (Clann a' Bhreataich, 'the kindred of the Briton-man') and the mighty Campbells both originated in Strathclyde, the kingdom of the Britons or Welsh.

Even after 1100 we find non-Gaelic peoples becoming Gaelicised, and thus organised into clans, in some parts of Scotland. The Norse remained a force in the west until 1266, but their adaptation to



■ Castle Sween in Knapdale – home of the MacSweens, who came from Ireland in the 11th century.



■ **Castle Weem** – base of the Menzies clan, who were Norman incomers but became Gaelicised.

their new world is shown by the fact that clans such as the MacLeods of Lewis and Harris, the MacAulays of Lewis, the MacPhails, the Nicholsons and the MacCorquodales are all of Scandinavian origin.

In the 12th and 13th centuries Scotland received an infusion of new blood from the continent, sometimes via England. Clans such as the Menzies, Chisholms and Frasers originated with such 'Norman' incomers, who settled in Gaelic areas, and whose descendants became Gaelicised.

All this means that clan origins are remarkably varied. There were others like Clann Duib, who descended from the ruling families of the old provinces or earldoms. Three such Lothian kindreds, the MacFarlanes, Buchanans and the MacAulays all branched off from the ruling family of the earldom of Lennox.

Other clans owed their birth to continuing contact with Ireland. The common ancestor of a clutch of kindreds in Cowal and Knapdale, in Argyll – the MacSweens, Larrants, MacLachlans, and others – was a member of an important dynasty in the north of Ireland who crossed the North Channel in the 12th century.

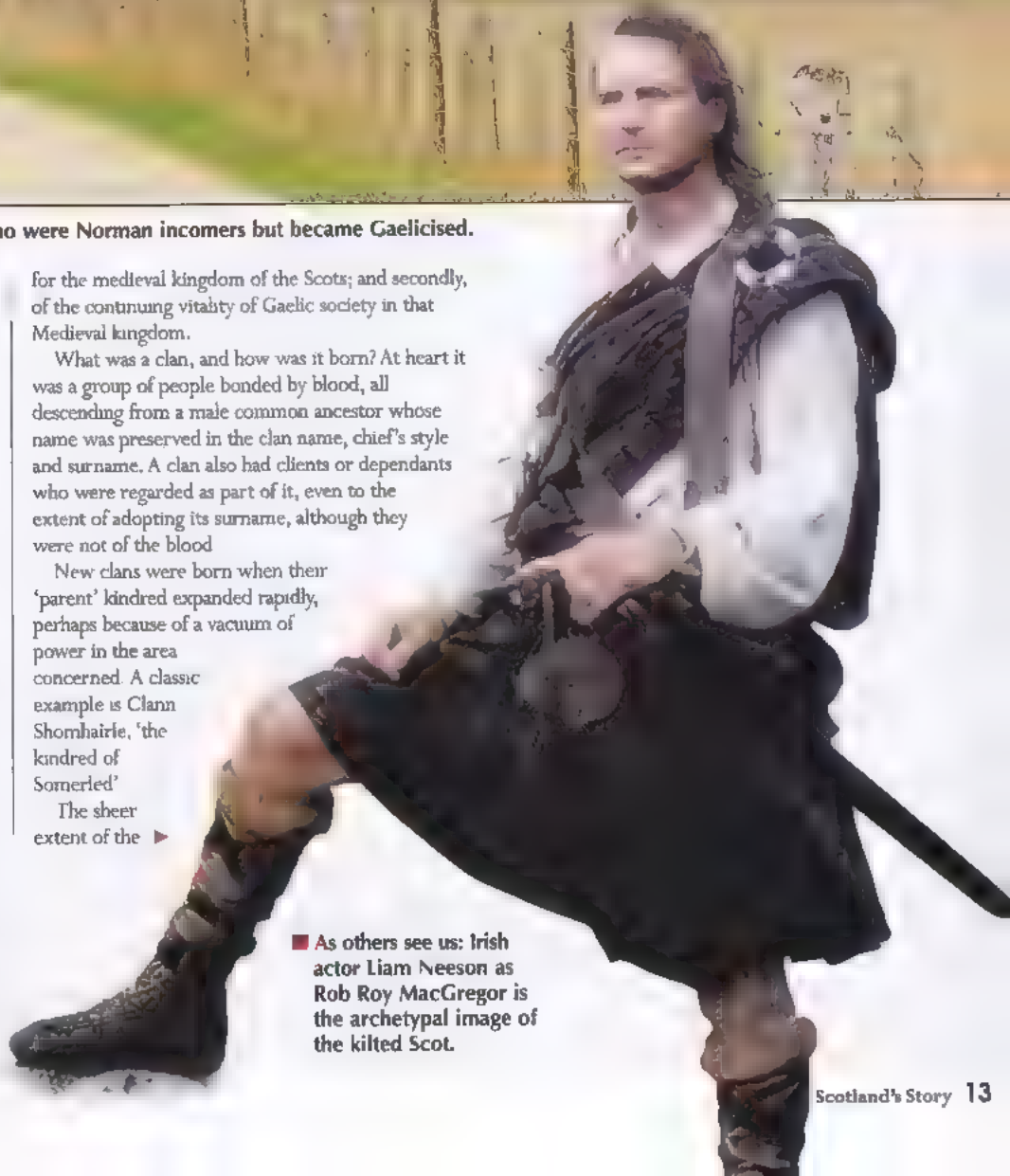
But whether their ultimate origins were Pictish, Welsh, Norse, Norman or Irish, the key point is that clans were an important manifestation, firstly, of the assimilation of various peoples to a Gaelic social norm in the Gaelic kingdom of Alba, the template

for the medieval kingdom of the Scots; and secondly, of the continuing vitality of Gaelic society in that Medieval kingdom.

What was a clan, and how was it born? At heart it was a group of people bonded by blood, all descending from a male common ancestor whose name was preserved in the clan name, chief's style and surname. A clan also had clients or dependants who were regarded as part of it, even to the extent of adopting its surname, although they were not of the blood.

New clans were born when their 'parent' kindred expanded rapidly, perhaps because of a vacuum of power in the area concerned. A classic example is Clann Shomhairle, 'the kindred of Somerled'.

The sheer extent of the ►



■ **As others see us:** Irish actor Liam Neeson as Rob Roy MacGregor is the archetypal image of the kilted Scot.

The expansion of a clan could only take place at the expense of another

► territory Somerled gained in the west, coupled with his own sudden death in 1164, probably explain why Clann Shomhairle divided into three new clans, the MacDougalls, MacDonalds and MacRuairis.

The birth process could be remarkably swift. Two generations after the death of the common ancestor, his grandson could already be the chief of a clan called after him. If this seems unlikely, it must be recalled that the Gaelic world had a relaxed and distinctive attitude towards sex and marriage, which made it possible for one man to give rise to numerous descendants very rapidly. To take an example from Gaelic Ireland, Turlough O'Donnell, lord of Tirconnell, who died in 1423, had 18 sons by ten women, and 59 grandsons.

Clans, then, were dynamic entities which went hand in hand with territorial and biological expansion. Contrary to the impression of a static and unchanging society created by the clan maps beloved

of the tartan tourist trade, the power and influence of individual clans was in a state of constant flux. The expansion of one clan could only take place at the expense of another.

This might happen through military confrontation, and it would be wrong to ignore the military dimension to clanship. Expansion based upon military power, the accumulation of clients, treaty and marriage alliance: this was the way to build up a regional lordship.

The outstanding example was the MacDonald-dominated Lordship of the Isles, which took in most of the west Highlands and Islands during the 14th and 15th centuries, and which was powerful enough to take on royal armies on three occasions.

The core of the lordship of the Campbells was Argyll and Breadalbane, but by the 16th and 17th centuries they were making major inroads into former MacDonald-controlled territories. So were

the MacKenzies, in Ross and Lewis. The various clans within such lordships formed a hierarchy beneath the leading clan, their precise position depending upon how binding their clientship was.

The MacDonald Lords of the Isles were advised by a council consisting of the chiefs of their vassal clans, divided into grades. This tells us that, again contrary to popular belief, clan society was highly stratified and aristocratic. But solidarity was created by the fact that, as a clan continued its relentless biological expansion, older blood-lines within it were constantly being supplanted by new ones, and thus declining in status. They carried aristocratic values with them to lower social levels.

The chief, and the ruling family of which he was a part, was the linchpin of the clan. An effective adult chief possessed enormous power over his clan and clients, including economic powers which allowed him to demand board and entertainment as required from both the clan gentry and the ordinary tenants, and to billet his own retinue and soldiers on the tenants. Even if powers such as these were not abused, it would be foolish to romanticise the quality of life of the commons of the clan, 'the tillers of the soil'.

With power went responsibility, primarily that of the chief to protect his people. The chief who failed to come up to scratch could expect the sanction of satire or cursing, wielded by the poet, or even of deposition by his council.

The heyday of the clans in Gaelic Scotland lasted from the 14th until the 16th century. During the reign of James VI and I (1567-1625), the efforts of the increasingly centralised Scottish state to penetrate Gaelic society reached a new intensity.

James's quest to forge a British state demanded the 'normalisation' of Gaelic Scotland and Ireland.

James set the tone for a century in which the clan elite steadily began to turn its back on traditional values, and to embrace the behaviour of the aristocracy of the rest of Britain.

The support of many of the clans for the exiled Stewart dynasty during the Jacobite era perpetuated the illusion that clanship was alive and well.

In reality, it was already in its death throes – and Jacobitism may have helped to bury it. ●

■ The island of Lewis – where, after 1100, Norsemen intermarried with locals. The result is that local clans such as the MacLeods, MacPhails, Nicholsons and MacCorquodales are all of some Scandinavian origin.



The Tayside town of Dunkeld has a rough old history that belies its gentle postcard looks.

Standing in the square at Dunkeld, you get the feeling of what it was like to live in a small Scottish town in the Middle Ages. In tiny houses that huddled together, weavers lived next door to carters, shopkeepers next door to wheelwrights. In just five minutes' walking you could reach open countryside.

But the sense of timelessness is largely an illusion, for this picturesque little place beloved of film-makers and tourists is younger than it looks. It was left a blazing ruin in 1689 with its magnificent cathedral destroyed. So the 'Little Houses' as they are called which line the High Street and Cathedral Street are a triumph of rebuilding and later of conservation. Magically, they capture the ancient essence of small-town Scotland.

What happened in 1689 was the aftermath of the Battle of Killiecrankie, fought several miles up the River Tay between the newly-raised Covenanting regiment of the Cameronians and a Jacobite army of Highlanders. The fight spilled over into Dunkeld, which was held by the Cameronians.

Hard-pressed and running short of ammunition, the Covenanters stripped lead from the cathedral roof to turn into musket balls and eventually, in desperation, set the town ablaze.

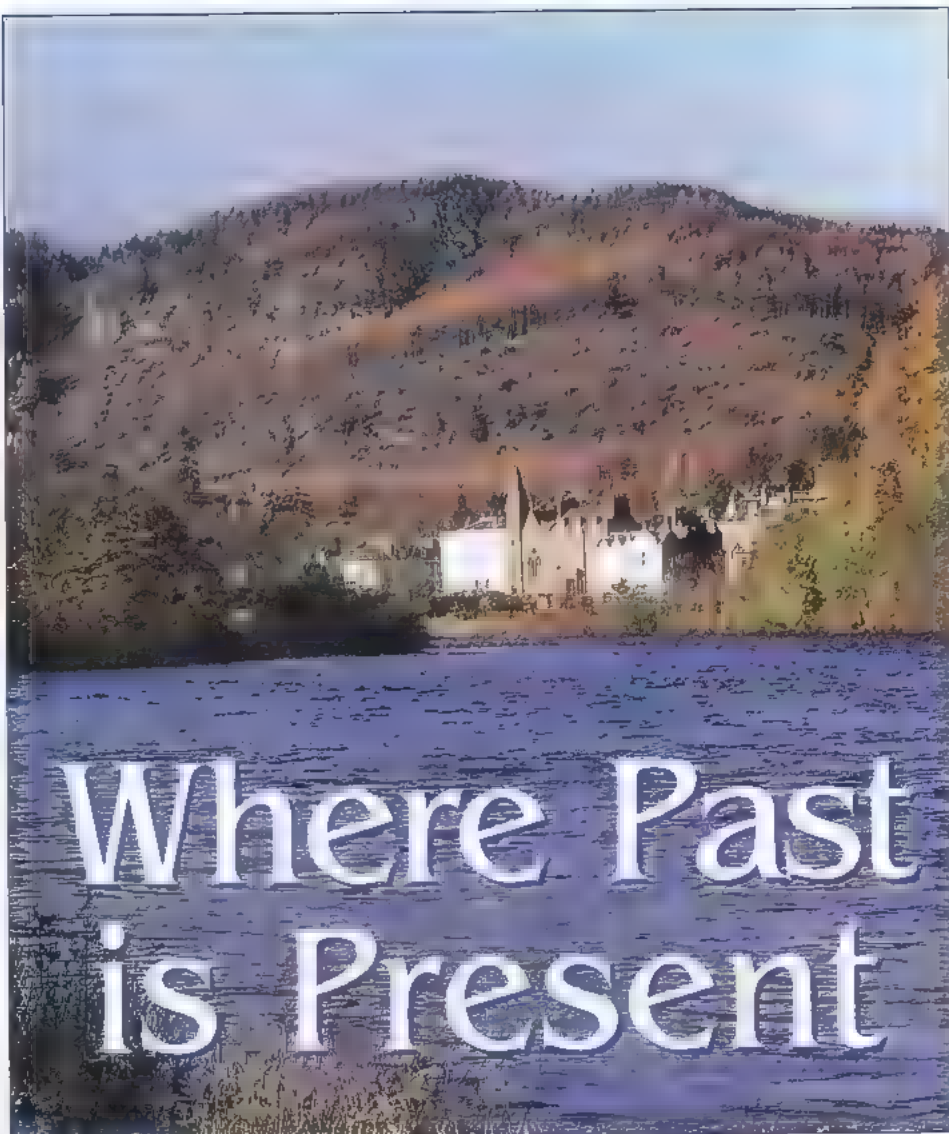
Even before, history had dealt roughly with this lovely little place beside a broad and generous river in Highland Perthshire. In the 6th century, it's thought that a monastery was built there.

Two centuries later Celtic monks from Iona moved in to escape the attacks of the Norsemen, but inevitably the Vikings penetrated inland at least three times looking for cash-won booty.

In the 9th century, Kenneth MacAlpin, the king who united the Picts and the Scots, made Dunkeld the ecclesiastical capital of all Scotland, and the mighty cathedral is thought to date from the 12th century. Now, however, the great nave and aisles remain roofless and after generations of dedicated work the church has been repaired to act as the parish church.

Fascinating tombs are found there. One is thought to be the burial place of the notorious Wolf of Badenoch, the 14th century natural son of King Robert II, who conducted a reign of terror in Morayshire. Bishops and warriors are also buried in these grounds, and here you will find the 19th century tomb of the so-called Count Roehenstart, Charles Edward Stewart by name. He was the child of the Young Pretender's daughter by a French bishop, and spent his life seeking royal recognition before being killed in a coach accident.

In the choir, there is a chunk in the wall which allowed lepers to follow the mass without getting in to infect the luckier citizens of Dunkeld. So



■ The broad and generous river sweeps past Dunkeld, set in a landscape famous for phenomenal trees.



despite the depredations of the past, this town echoes with antiquity and, almost miraculously, has not been allowed to grow. Apart from the visual appeal and history which make it a tourist lodestone, it manages to live in the present, while you can still appreciate the pubs, the small shops

and the hypermarket free ambience.

Dunkeld has a neighbouring Victorian village called Birnam across the Tay and they complement each other wonderfully in an area famous for spectacular woodland walks. In fact, the surroundings are famous for phenomenal trees.

One walk to the Hermitage, where salmon can be seen leaping the falls in season, takes you to Britain's tallest tree, a Douglas fir at nearly 65 metres high. And there's the ancient Birnam Oak, several centuries old with its trunk now hollow, and the Parent Larch planted in about 1740 and just an amble from Dunkeld Cathedral.

For information on these attractions, phone tourist information (01350 727688). This centre can also give you information on sporting facilities, including the supreme Tay salmon fishings, and golf at the local club – which is being expanded from nine holes to 18. A unique attraction in Dunkeld is MacLean's Real Music Bar, Tay Terrace (01350 727340), run by the great Scottish singer-songwriter Dougie MacLean and his wife Jennifer.

Here, in this small Scottish town, is a world-renowned venue for original folk based music where sessions can – and do – erupt spontaneously at any time. Here you can rock in the cradle of history. ●

A sag

*'At nine skills I
challenge
— a champion at
chess; runes I
rarely spoil; I
read books and
write; I'm skilled
at ski-ing
and shooting
and skulling and
more! I've
mastered music
and verse.'*

■ The f

This 12th century poem composed by Earl Rognvald of Orkney is preserved in the 'Orkneyinga Saga', which tells the story of the Orkney earls. In it we hear the voice of a man who is proud of his achievements as a descendant of the wild Vikings, but one who would be remembered for going off on crusade and for building the magnificent cathedral to his martyred relative, St Magnus, at Kirkwall.

During his lifetime there were still self-styled Viking warriors around, such as Svein Asleifson - Eric Linklater's 'Ultimate Viking' - who went off on plundering expeditions most summers. But the days of such splendid anachronisms were seriously numbered, for their world was no more.

It is a fortunate circumstance that the Icelandic sagas - great prose narratives in the language of Old Norse, originally circulating in the oral tradition but committed to vellum in the 13th and 14th centuries - should preserve so much information about Scottish history from the 9th to the 13th centuries.

Why, though, should such be the case, since it would appear unlikely that a remote island would take an interest in such matters?

One of those who settled in Iceland in the 9th century was a powerful widow by the name of Aud the Deep minded, daughter of Ketil Flatnose - a chieftain in the Hebrides. She departed when her son was killed fighting against

■ Thorfinn the Mighty: the warrior Earl of Orkney who built a cathedral on Birsay. His sons fought against England's King Harold at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066.

a on an epic scale



wastes of Iceland: hardy settlers came here to escape the tyranny of Harald Fine-Hair in Norway. They despised others who were not free.

the Scots, taking with her a number of free-born Hebrideans and Celtic slaves. The Icelanders practised ancestor worship, fascinated as they were by the great deeds of their forebears. So when the sagas were composed they contained a good deal of information about those who had originated in Ireland, Scotland and the Hebrides.

By the 13th century the sagamen shared an empathy with the folk of the northern and western isles who were pawns in a mighty chess game between Scotland and Norway, just as Iceland was succumbing to the forces of Norwegian imperialism. In all three areas there were opportunists who wished to sell out to foreign monarchs.

In the words of one contemporary commentator God showed his displeasure at the shenanigans of rival chiefs by placing 'a moving wheel on a restless axle' at the point where the boundaries of their territories met.

'After that each one forgets all brotherly love and kinship is wrecked'

So it was that the earls in 11th and 12th century Orkney spent as much time fighting one another as they did the enemy. Thorfinn the Mighty fought off his troublesome brothers as he pushed south into Caithness where he encountered conflict with the king of Scots.

Internecine strife was to outlast the Norse earldom which was essentially taken over by Scots

in the early 13th century. There was a similar story in the Isle of Man, ground between the formidable mill-stones of Scotland, Norway and England.

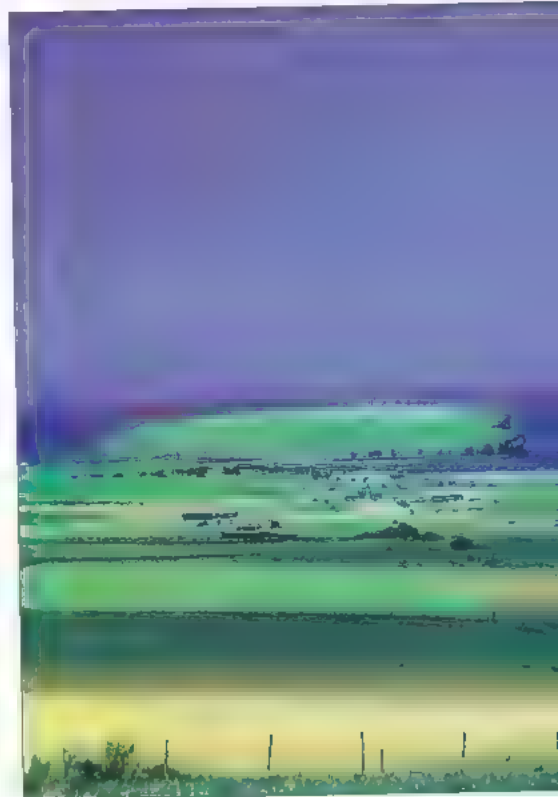
At the end of the 11th century the meteoric and gloriously named Magnus Barelegs, king of Norway, swept down from the north to conquer the Hebrides. He allegedly earned his soubriquet because he wore some kind of kilt.

When asked whether he favoured a long boring life or a short exciting one he opted for the latter and died fighting in an Irish bog in 1103.

From the time of Somerled, the Norwegian kingdom of the Isles was split between Man and Islay. Rival chiefs and kings sought patronage in Bergen then the capital of Norway and such was the intensity of intrigue and strife that the wheel was in danger of spinning off its axle altogether.

Most of the Icelandic settlers had fled Norway to escape the tyranny of Harald Fine-Hair. As lovers of freedom who established a kind of aristocratic republic in the North Atlantic, they despised those who failed to be free, such as slaves or thralls.

That contempt was extended to the source of most of Iceland's slave class, namely the Celtic west, whose inhabitants were deemed to share the worst characteristics of a base, treacherous class of servile underlings. Indeed if a man or woman with a Celtic pedigree is introduced into a saga it ►



■ The Brough of Birsay: where the earls of Orkney would have heard the sagas.

Magnus chose death over the Mediterranean

Magnus was never fond of battle, but as the elder son of the Earl of Orkney and the grandson of Viking warlord Thurmon the Mighty he could not avoid going on the odd raid.

However, on one naval campaign against the west coast of England and Wales he refused to fight those who had not injured him. On another raid he just sat in the hold of his ship reading the psalter. He was called a coward, but he was not.

When his father died, Magnus shared the earldom with his more violent cousin Haakon. But they could agree about nothing. Eventually, their chiefs said that matters had come to such an intolerable pass that one of them would have to be killed. Haakon gallantly advised: "Kill him then. I don't want to die. I much prefer ruling over people."

He arranged to meet Magnus on the isle of Egilsay in April 1116 to discuss the future. Both men were to come to the tryst alone and unarmed.

Magnus, being a trusting soul did, but Haakon arrived with armed warriors. He offered his gentle cousin a choice: exile in the Mediterranean, banishment to the Scottish mainland, or maiming and imprisonment. Unfortunately, Haakon's chiefs thought this offer too generous and decided death would be better. Magnus cheerfully agreed to their verdict, forgave them all, and asked his executioner to "hew a mighty stroke to the head so that he would be killed as a lord and not a thief."

Later a series of miracles were attributed to the pious Magnus and he was made a saint.

His remains, with cloven skull, are interred in the north choir pillar of the magnificent cathedral in Kirkwall which bears his name.



■ The cathedral in Kirkwall, built by Earl Rognvald to commemorate the martyred St Magnus

► is usually an indication that he or she will cause maximum bloodshed and mayhem before coming to a bad end.

Earl Sigurd experienced Scottish treachery at first hand when he was killed by a man whom he had already slain in battle. Having dispatched Maelbrigte Tusk he cut off his head and suspended it over his saddle-prow. The poisoned tooth of Maelbrigte grazed his leg, resulting in blood poisoning and death.

Several examples of such perfidy are to be found in the sagas. Frakokk, Lady of Kildonan, was the witch-like member of a powerful Celto-Norse kindred who thoughtfully prepared a poisoned shirt for one of her nephews, with fatal results. She paid the price when she was burned to death in her own house.

The sagas were obviously composed for aristocratic audiences, but such was the nature of society that most who wished to hear them recited or declaimed could do so.

Earl Rognvald takes up a good deal of space in Orkneyinga Saga. But while he is depicted as a talented poet and a likeable individual, he is also something of a bumbler who never seems to be in full control of his domain or its inhabitants.

There is an element of farce in the description of his expedition to the Mediterranean. His noble affair with the Lady Ermingerd of Narbonne is contaminated by the explicit sexual allusions in

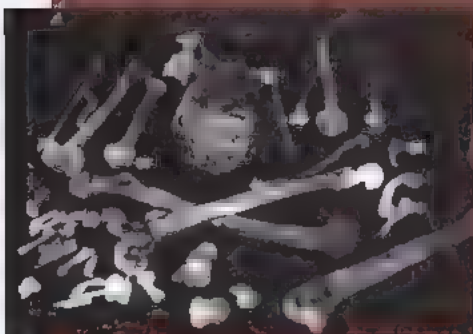
the poetic compositions of his men. Some of those same individuals may have been the ones who later left runic graffiti of a similar explicit nature in the tomb of Maes Howe when they sheltered there from a snow storm, an experience which drove two of them insane. Rognvald was killed in 1158.

The last of the great Orkney earls was Harald Maddadson, son of the Scottish Earl of Atholl and an Orcadian mother. A favourite of David I he was planted in the earldom to advance Scottish interests but Harald rebelled and joined forces with those elements which were hostile to the Canmore dynasty. His activities brought a Scottish army into the far north for the first time. He also fell foul of the Norwegian king to whom he was forced to cravenly submit.

If the 12th century belonged to Orkney the 13th focussed very much upon the Hebrides. Scottish kings in the later saga period became ever more aggressive towards the Western Isles and the troublesome clans therein.

Alexander II died at Kerrera in Oban Bay on his way to subdue the Isles people. The last of the Kings' Sagas tells of the increasing irritation of Haakon, the Old King of Norway, at Scottish activity in what was still Norwegian territory. In 1263 he mounted a massive expedition to the west to consolidate his hold over the islands.

Haakon was one of the greatest of European



■ The remains of St Magnus: The skull shows the damage caused by the executioner's blow.

THE £1 MILLION CHESSMEN

They are the most celebrated chessmen in the world, a stunning collection of four-inch high pieces carved out of walrus tusks.

The Lewis chessmen date back to between 1150 and 1175, and lay undisturbed under the sand at Uig, in Lewis, until winter gales eroded the dunes in 1831.

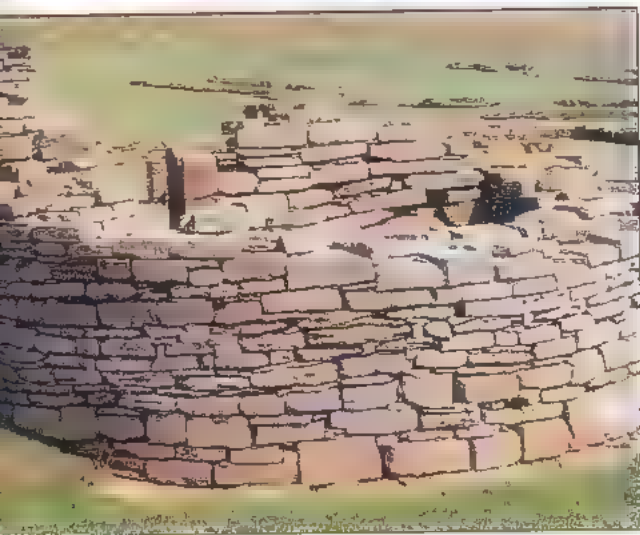
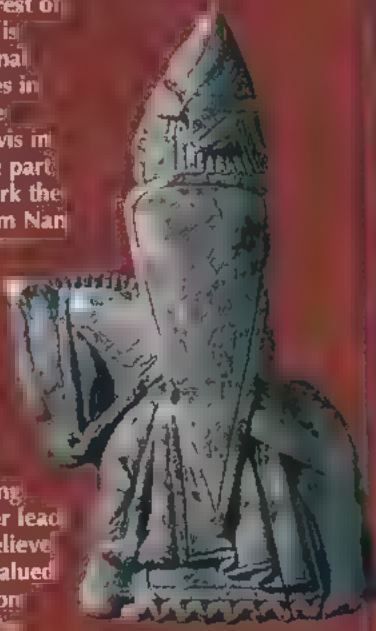
A total of 93 pieces were discovered, apparently when a crofter's cow stumbled on them. The collection includes pieces from six different chess sets, none of which was complete.

The crofter who found the pieces thought they were pigmy sprites. They were sold by the local minister for £84 within months of their discovery. Most went to the British Museum, but 11 were

in private hands until 1888 when they joined the rest of the set. The collection is now kept in the National Museum for Antiquities in Edinburgh. Sixty of the pieces returned to Lewis in 1995, when they were part of an exhibition to mark the opening of the Museum Na h-Eilean – the museum of the isles – in Stornoway.

The new museum cost £900,000 and is housed in a building which was formerly part of the Nicholson Institute.

Many Gaels including Donnie Munro, former lead singer with Runrig, believe the chessmen – now valued at more than £1 million each – should remain in Lewis for good.



■ The remains of the earl of Orkney's settlement on the Brough of Birsay.

rulers who extended his sway to Iceland and distant Greenland. He had been offered command of the French fleet during the Crusades.

His daughter's hand was sought by Alexander Nevsky though she eventually married a Spaniard.

His saga testifies to his power and reputation when it notes in a phrase, which shrinks the world map of the 13th century, that 'he sent falcons to the Sultan of Tunis'. Scotland on the other hand was ruled by the untested Alexander III, a mere stripling with no military experience. In the event Haakon's expedition, which held so much promise, was a fiasco.

Renegade Hebrideans broke off from the main fleet to sail up Loch Long, hauling their galleys across the portage at Arrochar, to ravage the

shores of Loch Lomond before raiding across country to Stirling. Their target was probably the estates of the Stewarts who had built up a formidable power-base in the west to the detriment of the Hebridean clans.

Haakon and Alexander both took part in the indecisive skirmish at Largs, in 1263, after which the Norwegian fleet suffered great losses in equinoctial storms. Haakon retreated back through the Hebrides to Orkney where he became fatally ill.

On his deathbed in the Bishop's Palace, Kirkwall, the clerics were reading him saints' lives when he demanded that they desist and read the sagas of his ancestors instead. He died when the saga of his immediate

predecessor as king of Norway was completed. Three years later by the Treaty of Perth the Hebrides were ceded to the Scots. Orkney and Shetland remained subject to Norwegian sovereignty until the mid 15th century at which point almost 700 hundred years of Scandinavian control of territory now deemed to be Scottish finally came to an end.

The magnificent longships no longer took the salt road west over sea to oversee Norway's island domain. But the Scandinavian legacy is still there in the landscape, in placenames, in the Norse influence on the Gaelic and Scots languages, in the numerous tales about mighty warriors and Norwegian princesses and in the remarkable concentration of early stone castles in the Western Isles. The author of 'Haakon's Saga' knew that 1263 saw the last of the Vikings. The future now belonged to Scotland. ●

TIMELINE

870-900

Aud the Deep-minded takes Hebridean slaves to Iceland.

1103

Magnus Barelegs, King of Norway, dies fighting in Ireland.

1116

St Magnus is murdered by his cousin Haakon, after agreeing to meet him to discuss the earldom of Orkney.

1137

Earl Rognvald starts construction of St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, Orkney.

1150-75

The Lewis Chessmen are carved.

1158

Death of Earl Rognvald of Orkney.

1249

Alexander II, King of Scots, dies on the island of Kerrera aiming to subdue the Hebrides for Scotland.

1263

Haakon the king of Norway fails to defeat Alexander II, King of Scots at the Battle of Largs. Haakon's death leads to the Western Isles coming back under Scots control.



■ Carving of a dragon, left by Vikings at Maes Howe, in Orkney.

Did a storm win the Battle of Largs?

It's a proud folk memory, the final rout of the Vikings by bold Scots soldiers of Alexander III. But maybe the weather helped a little...

It was Ketil Flatnose who 'preferred to go west across the sea to Scotland' because, he said, he thought it would be 'good living there'. Soon a host of semi-independent Viking rulers were roistering round the Scottish coast and, at the height of their power in the 10th century, a large area of the north and all the Western Isles, Caithness, Sutherland and most of Ross belonged to the Norwegians.

Scotland won back the mainland and Alexander II, King of Scots, at the time of his death in 1249, was engaged in military operations in the Western Isles.

His son, Alexander III, tried to buy back these islands from Norway and, when the attempt failed, a raid was made on Skye in 1262. There were also rumours that Alexander III was planning to win back all the Hebrides. When Haakon IV, the Norwegian king, heard of this, he swore revenge.

He was at Widewall Bay in Orkney, presumably awaiting late arrivals, when a 'great darkness came over the sun, in such a way that a small ring was clear about the outside of the sun.' The eclipse places Haakon's ships still in Norwegian waters on 5th August, dangerously late for a naval expedition.

The Scots were aware of the threat and, not knowing where the attack would come from, people in the most vulnerable coastal areas were ready to

stand to arms at the shortest possible notice. In the late summer of 1263 Haakon, in his own 'great ship with its fine dragon head all gilded' led his 160-strong battle fleet into the Firth of Clyde.

He sent messengers to Alexander to discuss peace terms, and both kings were in agreement about most of the claims. Alexander, however, could not accept that Arran, Bute, and the Cumbraes should come under Norwegian rule.

Haakon then sailed into the Largs channel and anchored off the Cumbraes. Because of shortage of provisions, the Norwegians wanted to go ashore and plunder, but Haakon prevented this and kept sending messages to the Scottish king.

These peace attempts were finally abandoned when a large body of Scots was seen to be mustering on the shore.

On Monday, October 1, a great storm hit the Norwegian fleet and many ships, including the king's, broke moorings and drifted with the wind. One merchant ship and some longships were driven aground on the Largs shore. The Scots attacked them, but when a lull in the storm allowed Haakon to send in reinforcements, the Scots retreated. During the night, the Vikings stayed ashore, but the Scots were able to remove some of the merchant ship's cargo.

The next morning, King Haakon landed with

more men, but, when fighting broke out, he was persuaded to return to the fleet in a small boat.

One Norwegian leader took up position on a grassy mound with 200 men, while about 600 more Norwegians were on the shore. A large body of Scots – about 500 knights mounted on Spanish horses and about 1,000 foot soldiers armed with swords, bows and axes – attacked the mound.

The Norsemen there, afraid of being surrounded, began making their way to the beach. Others already there panicked when they saw their comrades retreating and there was a scramble for the boats, accompanied by a storm of stones and arrows. Some Norwegians were killed by Scots and others drowned as their boats capsized in the sea. Other Norwegians made a stand on the beach.

Still there was no great battle – a clumsy charge of horse along the beach, a counter charge, then the Scots fell back to the escarpment, from where they watched as the Norwegians struggled out to their ships and sailed away. Later chroniclers would call this a 'cruel' battle in which thousands fell on both sides – when the outcome was probably decided by the weather.

Nevertheless, as author John Prebbie has opined, it was a decisive exchange. Though he reassembled his fleet, Haakon retired to Kirkwall, "where death and the next bitter winter took the surrender of his aged body".

Three years later, by the Treaty of Perth, his successor released the Western Isles to Scotland for 4,000 merks of refined silver and an annual payment of 100 more. Whether these were ever paid, no record has been found. ●



■ Re-enactment of a historic moment that has lived over 700 years in Scotland's memory. But the action and casualties were hardly on an epic scale.



■ The inauguration of King Alexander III in 1249 at Scone, as illustrated in Walter Bower's 15th century Scotichronicon.

Tough and Tender

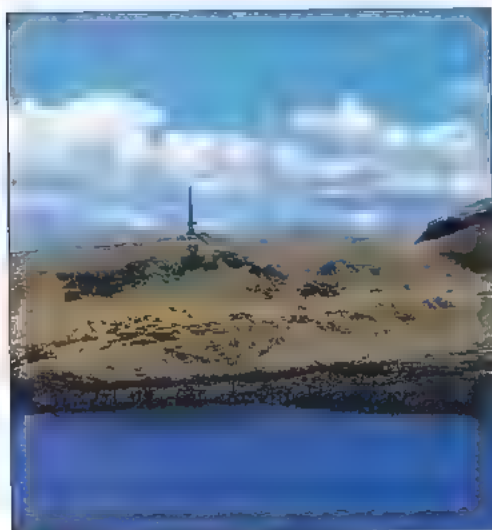
Alexander II fought hard to rationalise his kingdom, and Alexander III refined an economically content Scotland in the image we know today. As trouble was to follow, the people had good reason to mourn these kings



■ Queensferry is now dominated by the magnificent railway bridge over the Forth. But during the reigns of Alexander II and III,

*When Alexander our kyng was dede,
That Scotlande lede in lauche and le,
Away was sons of alle and brede.
Off wyne and wax, of gamyn and gle
Our golde was changit in to lede
Christ, borne of virgynyte,
Succoure Scotlande, and ramede,
That stade is in perplexite*

— from Andrew of Wyntoun's original chronicle.



■ Pencil Monument marking Battle of Largs.

The earliest surviving poem written in the Scots language is a plaintive verse about Scotland's desperate state following Alexander III's death on 19 March, 1286. Andrew of Wyntoun's words bewail how there is no longer the abundance of beer and bread, wine and wax, sport and merriment that there once was when Alexander reigned, and that their gold had changed into lead. It is a vivid witness to the life of those who lived through the following decade of political uncertainty leading to conquest and oppression.

Alexander died leaving an infant granddaughter in Norway as his heir. It was not until 1290 that she set sail for a kingdom she had never seen, and she died in Orkney before she reached her realm. There was no obvious successor to the throne. The two prime candidates, the aged Robert Bruce (grandfather of King Robert I) and John Balliol, Lord of Galloway, were from families which had competed vigorously for control over the South West for generations.

Civil war had been averted only by the prospect of Edward I of England arbitrating between them. But Edward, when he came, wanted to act as overlord of Scotland, not as a neighbouring king. After John Balliol became king, Edward's ruthless insistence on John's complete submission to Edward's jurisdiction led inevitably to war. Scottish resistance was swiftly crushed, and within months King John and the Scottish nobility were languishing in English custody. The non-noble Scots at home, meanwhile, suffered the full severity of Edward's exploitation.

Looking back from such harsh and anxious times, Alexander III's reign must have seemed a

golden age indeed. How different it must have seemed only five years before his death.

The king had ruled a stable and secure realm for about 20 years, and he had two sons, and a daughter who had married the king of Norway. It was the first time in nearly 200 years that the future of the royal dynasty had seemed so secure. But within a few years, all three of Alexander's children had died.

He decided he must marry again, and found a suitable bride in France. On March 18, Alexander held a council at Edinburgh Castle, followed by a banquet. His bride was at Kinghorn in Fife, and although it was getting late and a storm threatened, Alexander was determined that he would spend the night with her. In the dark and foul weather the king became separated from his two esquires, and suffered a fatal fall only minutes from his destination.

The peace and prosperity of Alexander's reign was not simply the nostalgic dream of a shattered people. Throughout Britain and Ireland this had been a time of economic growth. In England and Ireland the money supply rose by about 50 per cent between 1250 and 1280. In Scotland this growth was far more spectacular. The money supply trebled. This money was silver coin whose value was determined by its weight. This increase therefore represents a real growth in the amount of silver coming into Scotland. And it must be that the Scottish economy was earning more than it was spending.

In Alexander's reign Scotland achieved greater security internationally than it had ever previously enjoyed. The Treaty of Perth had secured the west of the kingdom against incursions from the



King's poet guarded the Gaelic tone

Despite the Anglo-Normanising changes of the preceding 150 years, the inauguration ceremony of Alexander III in 1249 was a very Gaelic affair. The scene is depicted by a colourful illustration in Walter Bower's 15th-century manuscript of his *Scotichronicon*.

The Gaelic nature of the proceedings was marked by the actions of the king's poet, who read out the king's royal pedigree – a key part of the ceremony, as it confirmed his right as heir to the throne.

For Alexander's ceremony the poet probably also composed an inaugural ode and presented to the king the wand, or sceptre, of kingship.

The poet also translated the origins of the Scots kings into Latin, thereby allowing newcomers from England and the Continent to adopt this ultimate badge of Scottish identity.

The duties of the king's poet in ancient Gaelic society were so important that they accorded him almost the same rank and privileges as his master. It is likely the office retained such prestige in Alexander's time.

The presentation of the sword to the king as the final step in the ceremony was, again, a tradition established by Scotland's ancient Gaelic kings.

Alexander was enthroned by his leading nobles, the Earls of Fife and Strathearn. In ancient Gaelic Scotland, the king was also 'elected' by his leading nobles.

And the ancient connection between church and state, probably established between St Columba and King Aedan in 574, was renewed by the investment of the sacred mantle upon Alexander by the Bishop of St Andrews and the Abbot of Scone.

It is held that retention of a strong Gaelic element to such proceedings helped 'Scotticise' incoming Anglo-Normans, and at the same time helped guarantee the nation's survival.

the only way to cross this stretch of water was by using a ferry boat

Looking back from hard and anxious times, the reign of Alexander III must have seemed a golden age indeed

kingdom of Man and the Isles, and from the threat of invasion from kings of Norway (who the rulers of Man and the Isles recognised as their overlords). In the treaty the King of Norway sold the sovereignty over Man and the Isles to Alexander.

The ruling families in Argyll and the Isles, notably the MacDougalls and MacDonalds, continued to dominate the west highlands and islands, although now as Alexander's barons.

Another achievement was that the kingdom's independence from the King of England was formally recognised by the Papacy in the early part of Alexander's reign. Alexander's dealings with kings of England (including Edward I) were cordial, and were conducted as one sovereign monarch to another.

In many ways, however, the success of Alexander III's reign was built on the ruthless determination of his father, Alexander II (1214-49), to make Scotland a fully-fledged independent kingdom united under its monarch's authority.

It was Alexander II who first pushed the Papacy to recognise that Scotland was a sovereign realm (a relatively new concept at the time) and he

achieved the first tentative admission off this status from a king of England in the protocol surrounding the Treaty of York (1237).

It was Alexander II who brutally extinguished the MacWilliam family who had repeatedly challenged for the throne between the 1170s and 1230. The MacWilliams regularly found support from ruling families in the highly-competitive political arena stretching along the western seas from northern Ireland and Galloway to the far north and Orkney. Alexander II took any opportunity he could to bring any of this area under his control. He crushed a rising in Galloway provoked by his determination to break up the lordship of Galloway. He mutilated 80 men in Caithness after the murder of the bishop there who was trying to extend Alexander's authority in the north. He led armies into Moray and Argyll, ►



■ Kerrera and the Sound of Mull – where the determined Alexander II died while on campaign.



■ The King is dead... but on the demise of Alexander III, people worried about his pennies (right).

► and died on the island of Kerrera near Oban while on campaign

Alexander II's most significant achievement, however, was in developing Scotland's civil law. Before his reign there were many different authorities which held courts which sought to resolve disputes over land holding. There were the professional Gaelic hereditary judges who functioned as arbitrators in a designated region or locality. There was the Church, whose official in some (but not yet all) regions was the sheriff, who only recently was acquiring a judicial role. By the end of Alexander II's reign a system had evolved which meant that the king was able to function as guarantor for everyone's property.

The system hinged on the sheriff and his court, which were now established throughout the kingdom except in the far north and west. The king, who already was the final authority in

criminal cases, was now becoming the final authority in civil cases too. The kingdom was emerging as a single sovereign jurisdiction.

This had an important effect in the way people identified themselves. Before Alexander II's reign the kingdom was usually thought of as consisting of a number of different regions, such as Lothian, Galloway, Moray, and so on. Each of these regions (or 'countries') would have had their own laws and customs. One of these regions (the most important one) was actually called 'Scotland', which is very confusing.

This was the historic core of the kingdom stretching from the River Forth in the south along the east as far as the border with Moray in the north. It is quite strange to think that Inverness, Edinburgh or Glasgow were not considered part of Scotland, even though there was no question that they were part of the kingdom. But there is

no other way of understanding a statement such as this, referring to William I's last journey around his kingdom in 1214: "William returned to Scotland from Moray, and then went into Loth"

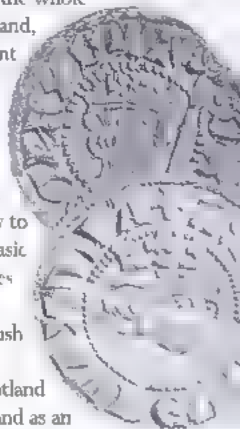
The best way to grasp this is to regard the kingdom ruled by William I as including within it more than one country. This is not so different from the UK today, which includes four different nations. Also, the people of Lothian, Moray, Galloway, 'Strathclyde' and Argyll did not see themselves chiefly (if at all) as 'Scots'. The 'Scots' were the people between the Forth and the border with Moray, the inhabitants of Scotland in this restricted sense.

In Alexander II's reign, however, there was a fundamental change. 'Scotland' began to be used consistently by people in the south-east – and no doubt other areas – to refer to the kingdom as a whole.

This suggests that the kingdom's inhabitants no longer saw themselves first and foremost as in different 'countries', but as all in one country, which they called Scotland. It is as if people in the UK were to forget about Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and regard the whole kingdom as one country, England, taking the name of its dominant region.

It was probably not until Alexander III's reign, however, that the kingdom's inhabitants generally regarded themselves as 'Scots'. It is easy to see, in the process of such a basic change in identity, how families of Norman origin like the Bruces could become as Scottish as anyone else.

By Alexander III's reign Scotland had taken shape as a country and as an identity that we can recognise as fundamentally the same as Scotland today. Within a generation, it would meet its greatest test of survival, in the Wars of Independence. ■



THE KING'S FINAL FATAL JOURNEY

The death of Alexander III is a tale rich in drama. The scene is set in the summer of 1248, when the king, drunk on the French wine, mounts his horse at Edinburgh Castle and, in a fierce storm, heads out to sea with his queen and Kinghorn, his first

born children and first wife were all dead. At 44 he was in prime and the new French bride found for him was the young Yolanda de Dreux, daughter of the Count of Dreux.

Prospects looked rosy as they married at Jedburgh Abbey, but it all ended six months later on that fateful night of March 19, 1249. The reluctant husband at Queensferry and all the king's men tried to hold him back from a gale-swept crossing to the shore, and a perilous ride in the dark, but in vain. The next morning, he was found dead on the shore, near the spot pictured right. His death was greatly significant, for it plunged Scotland into the turmoil of the Wars of Independence.

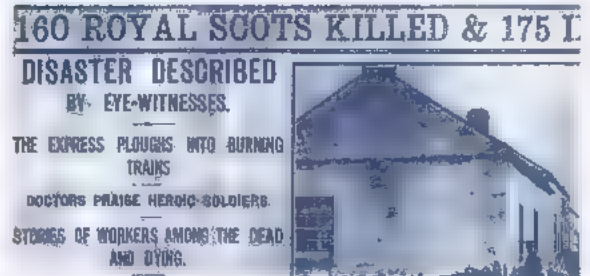
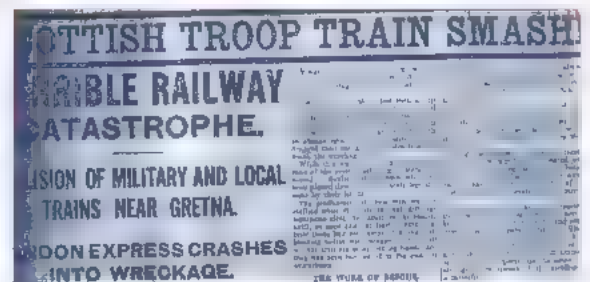
The chronicler Walter Bower, writing in the 15th century, gave this account of Alexander's end:

"The king was delayed at South Queensferry and then set out

westward. When advised by his companions not to go beyond inverkeithing that night, he spurned their counsel and, with his knights, hurried by a precipitous track towards Kinghorn Regis. To the west of that place beside the shore his horse stumbled in the sand, and alas! the noble king, too negligently attended by his followers, broke his neck and expired."

Bower clearly records that Alexander died on the beach, so there is the enduring and compelling image of him falling over the cliff almost as a metaphor for Scotland's new plight.





■ The scene of carnage after the crash, and how the Daily Record and Mail told the nation about the catastrophe.

160 Royal Scots die in train holocaust

Injured men implore rescuers to shoot them

First newspaper report of the rail catastrophe on May 22, 1915, from the Daily Record and Mail. The final death toll was even worse than the early estimates

The most terrible railway disaster in the history of Great Britain, both in its overwhelming magnitude and horror occurred in the early hours of yesterday morning on the Caledonian Railway Line near Gretna Green.

Three trains were involved, and the occupants of one of these, 550 members of "A" and "D" companies of the Royal Scots, who are mostly based in the Leith and Musselburgh districts, were practically annihilated, and a number of civilians in the other two trains were either killed or injured.

Up to midnight conflicting and varied estimates of the dead and injured were to hand.

It seems, however, to be clearly established that the dead number at least 160 and the injured 175.

Of this poignant death toll Leith's proportion is severely heavy. No fewer than 146 coffins reached the drill hall there yesterday evening.

● The final toll eventually reached 227 dead and 246 injured. It is the worst rail disaster ever to have taken place in Britain.

An eyewitness account

A young farmer, who was probably the only eyewitness of the actual disaster, gave a vivid impression of what he had witnessed.

"My home is just over the way," he said, pointing to a house a little beyond the field where the dead were lying. I was just finishing breakfast when I was startled by a terrific crash.

"I rushed from the house and, looking towards the railway line, I was horrified to see the north-going Glasgow express dash into a mass of wreckage.

"I realised then what had been the cause of the crash which I had heard at breakfast. The collision had already taken place and I had just been in time to witness the second.

"I had scarcely grasped the horror of it all when I was appalled to observe the whole mass of wreckage burst into flames.

"So far as I can recall there was no smoke or fire until the second collision took place. An awesome scene presented itself as I approached.

"I saw a number of khaki-clad figures running distractedly about the wreckage, from which there came piercing screams and groans. At first the

men seemed paralysed with horror for they knew what I did not know at the moment of my arrival—that under the burning woodwork were hundreds of their companions.

"The men, however, speedily regained their nerve and set about the work of rescue with promptitude. I immediately offered my services and although the work was heart-breaking I did my best.

"The sights I witnessed will not be forgotten. One man was pinned beneath a huge mass of wreckage.

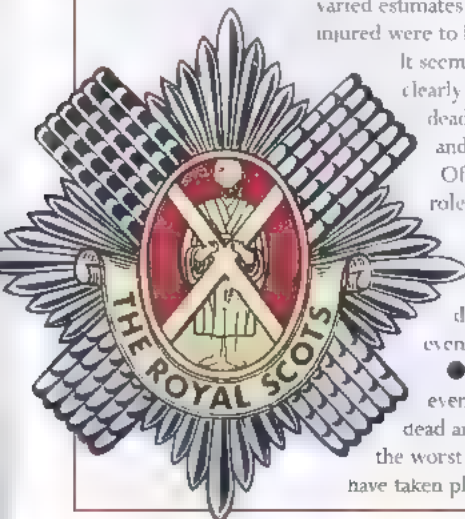
"The upper portion of his body seemed to have escaped injury, and he was quite conscious but the frightful part of his predicament was that his legs seemed to be only charred stumps.

"He was removed after the greatest exertion on the part of the rescuers.

"Another man it was found impossible to remove from the debris until his hands were amputated.

"These men were in the death throes," concluded the farmer with a shudder.

"So terrible was the agony they were undergoing that they were praying to their would-be rescuers to shoot them, and thus end their misery."



Scot who took the bumps out of the road

They laughed at John Boyd Dunlop's 'pudding tyres'. But he had the last laugh as the world took them on

The pneumatic tyre is one of the most important and useful devices ever invented. Without it, the transport system we know today couldn't exist. It was a Scot, John Boyd Dunlop, who developed the pneumatic tyre and turned it into the vital everyday object we all use today. Yet he was not a transport expert or even an engineer – he was a vet.

Dunlop was born into a farming family at Dreghorn, Ayrshire, in 1840. He qualified as a veterinary surgeon and in 1867 moved to Belfast to practise. Twenty years later, his nine-year-old son complained that his tricycle was too bumpy. Dunlop realised that the problem lay in the fact that the trike's solid rubber tyres could not absorb any impact of hard surface. Intrigued, he tried to fathom out a solution.

The answer he came up with was filling a rubber tube with air to provide a cushioning effect and then placing it inside the tyres. The development worked – the trike became far more comfortable to ride and went faster and further. Dunlop then asked a local Belfast cycle manufacturer to modify the wheel to take spokes and the invention had its first public trial in 1889 at the Queen's College sports day.

When the public saw the tyres, they thought they were a joke, and called them 'pudding tyres'. Dunlop, however, had the last laugh – his rider won easily.

Dunlop was not the first to realise the potential of the pneumatic tyre – another Scot, Robert William Thomson, had done that in the 1840s. But Dunlop was the first to develop, patent and market a practical version of it.

He went into business with a Dublin businessman and moved there to develop the tyre business which bore the Dunlop name. Within 10 years of being patented, the pneumatic tyre had almost completely replaced solid tyres and had been adapted for the latest mode of travel – the motor car – by two brothers called Michelin.

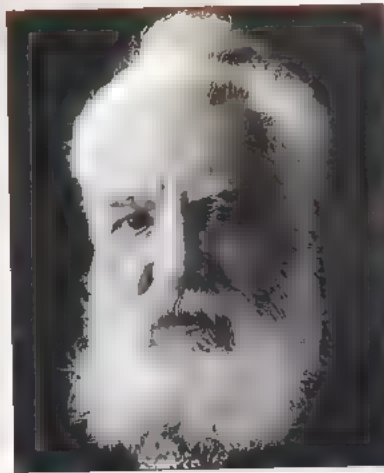
Dunlop himself did not earn much out of the company he founded. He sold out in 1896, and continued to live in Dublin, where he bought a draper's business, and died in 1921. His invention, however, went from strength to strength and the Dunlop company continued to bear his name as it became one of the world's biggest tyre companies.



■ 'On yer bike' was an easier concept after Dunlop's idea took out the shake and rattle.

Just to give his Mabel a ring

Love pushed Alexander Graham Bell into telegraphic experiments, but he came up with the telephone



■ Obsessed with making money, he made an astonishing device.

It was a simple phrase, spoken in a strong Scots accent, but it is one of the most vital sentences the world has known.

The words, "Mr Watson - come here. I want you", were the first ever to be transmitted by telephone, and the man who spoke them was Alexander Graham Bell - one of the greatest scientific pioneers in history.

Despite the brilliance of his breakthrough with the telephone, Bell was more interested in deafness than in sound. He was a teacher of the deaf, and this was where his real lifelong interest lay.

It was only by a stroke of luck that his genius in inventing the world's first telephone was recognised. The man who was funding his research was more interested in pressing on with work on the old-fashioned telegraph than allowing Bell to mess around with new-fangled devices.

Bell came from a Scottish family

with a history of interest in speech. His grandfather learned to speak in many different dialects and opened a school of elocution in Dundee. His son Alexander senior - the inventor's father - went to Canada and taught deaf people to speak.

He eventually returned home, and the inventor-to-be was born in Edinburgh in March, 1847. The boy didn't adopt Graham as his middle name until he was 11, when he added it in testament to a Canadian boy staying with the family at the time.

Bell's father decided to return to Canada, and his son, then 23, went too. The younger Alexander had already established a reputation as a speech teacher, and had been resident master at Weston House Academy in Elgin.

Across the Atlantic, he was offered a job as Professor of Vocal Physiology and Elocution at Boston University. He also fell in love with a local teenager, Mabel Hubbard, the deaf

daughter of a powerful local businessman. Bell became obsessed with making money, so he could ask for Mabel's hand in marriage. He came up with the idea of a multiple telegraph, which allowed Morse Code dots and dashes to be sent at different pitches, so increasing its usefulness.

Mabel's father, Gardiner Greene Hubbard, thought it an excellent idea and backed it. However, during periods when the work didn't move forward, Bell noticed that his device carried a faint echo of human speech.

He came up with the idea of experimenting to see if a pair of wires could be made to transmit a voice. His assistant, Tom Watson, was equally enthusiastic, and the two decided to really go for it.

Progress on the telegraph slipped back, and Hubbard, who thought the idea of 'electric speech' an absurdity, became ever more impatient at the lack of work on the device he really wanted to see developed. Then on 10 March, 1876, the breakthrough came.

Bell's assistant, who was in the next room, suddenly heard his boss's words boom through the machine. 'Mr Watson - come here. I want you.' He rushed next door to tell Bell the news, and the two were delirious.

That very night, Alexander wrote to his mother saying "This is a great day for me. I feel I have at last struck the solution of a great problem. The day is coming when telegraph wires will be laid on houses just like water or gas, and friends will converse with each other without leaving home."

Unfortunately, Hubbard still wasn't convinced. He urged Bell to continue developing the multiple telegraph, and arranged for him to demonstrate



■ A visitor to the Telephone Jubilee exhibition in 1926 compares Bell's invention to the 'latest' model.

it at the US Centennial Exhibition later that year.

Bell, still keen to marry Mabel, humoured him and did so - and, indeed, the audience loved it. But he also asked them if they'd like to see an 'idea in embryo' - the telephone.

They stayed to witness something they were convinced was fantasy. Then a voice boomed out of a small box on a table - it was Bell singing 'God Save the Queen'. They were stunned. Another famous Scots scientist and inventor, William Thomson (Lord Kelvin), was in the audience. He rushed up to Bell, shook his hand, and said: 'This is the most marvellous thing I have seen in America!'

Soon, even Hubbard realised the power of the new invention - and Bell married Mabel in 1877.

Would-be preacher who changed his fortune with a kaleidoscope

DAVID BREWSTER

Edinburgh-born Sir David Brewster could hardly be called a grey beard - he was the Scot who invented the kaleidoscope. Born in 1781, Brewster showed exceptional intelligence as a youngster and invented his first telescope at the age of 10. He studied at university to become a preacher, but was let down by a speech impediment.

Undaunted, he went on to a distinguished career in optics, and his work led to the development of lenses for long-distance transmission of beams from lighthouses.

He also took a great interest in another discipline which was in its early stages at the time - photography. It was the

kaleidoscope, though, which made him. He patented the device in 1817 and, because its design of pieces of glass reflected into mirrors turned optics into beauty, it became immensely popular.

In London and Paris 200,000 were sold in the first three months alone, and gradually it captured the attention of the whole world. Most people bought the device as a trivial plaything, but Brewster was a serious scientist, devoted to his subject.

He produced 300 scientific papers and edited three journals. He published a biography of Newton and was a leading academic, becoming Principal of St Andrews and Edinburgh universities and helping to set up the British Association for the Advancement of Science. He died in 1868.



■ Brewster's invention was an instant hit

When the Wizards weaved their magic



At Wembley in 1928, a team of tiny Scots took on England's giants on a rain-soaked pitch... and became football legends

In the years since our battles with England moved from blood-spattered fields to sweat-soaked pitches, no venue has more stirred the Scottish hearts than Wembley.

The London stadium has been the scene of glory and heartbreak, joyous screams and bitter tears. All of which have served to raise the meeting of 1928 to the pantheon of sporting legends.

It was the ultimate classic: A bewildering, 90-minute, 5-1 epic of skill, trickery and flair by 11 mostly wee men who got together for the first and only time to perform wonders.

They were the Wembley Wizards, who became heroes with no preparation, no coach and, according to the pundits, no hope of beating the towering English.

The choice of the selectors had been heavily slanted beforehand. Bob McPhail, Davie Meiklejohn and Jimmy McGrory had been ignored. There were only three home-based players: Jack Harkness, Jimmy Dunn and Alan Morton.

These were the 11 history-makers: Harkness (Queen's Park), Nelson (Cardiff City), Law (Chelsea), Gibson (Aston Villa), Bradshaw (Burton), McMullan (Manchester City); Jackson (Huddersfield), Dunn (Hibernian), Gallacher (Newcastle), James (Preston) and Morton (Rangers).

They lined up against a confident English select of Hufton; Goodall, Jones; Edwards, Wilson, Heald; Hulme, Kelly, Dean, Bradford, and Smith.

Debutant Tom Bradshaw, the only outfielder over 6ft, was jokingly nicknamed "Tiny". He was up against the prolific Everton scorer Dixie Dean. Another uncapped defender, 19-year-old Tommy Law, had to cover Arsenal winger Joe Hulme, who was

rated the fastest man in football.

Times were difficult. Unemployment remained high as Ramsay MacDonald's Labour Government tried to recover from the 1926 General Strike.

The fans needed a boost. As 10,000 of them made their way to Euston Station on LNER excursions costing 25 shillings and sixpence (£1.27), they hoped for the best... while expecting the worst.

Players were certainly not pampered. Alex James reckoned the team would be better prepared if they stayed outside London the night before the game. But members of the SFA Council wanted to be among the bright lights, so the Scotland party was booked into the Regent Palace Hotel in Piccadilly.

Jimmy McMullan, the diminutive and tenacious skipper, wasn't too worried about the noise. His greater concern was that his half-back partner, Jimmy Gibson, couldn't appear until the morning of the game.

Gathering the rest of his team together on the Friday night, he told them not to talk back to the Scottish referee, Willie Bell. Then the captain urged his players: "Get your head on your pillows... and pray for rain."

Thus, he hoped, would make the Wembley surface greasy and eliminate the English team's height advantage.

When he reached his hotel room, the young Scots goalkeeper Jack Harkness found a bottle of aspirins tied to his room key. With it came a teasing note from Dixie Dean, the English forward, saying: "Have a good sleep... I'll be around tomorrow."

It seems somebody Up There was listening that night. The

■ The match ball: signed by all the players.



■ Hughie Gallacher, left, and Alex Jackson shared in Scotland's magnificent win. But both of their lives were to end in tragedy.



■ The Duke of York (later to be King George VI) shakes hands with goalkeeper Jack Harkness, before the game, while Scotland team-mates Hughie Gallacher, Alex Jackson, Jimmy Gibson, Jimmy Nelson, Tom Bradshaw and captain Jimmy McMullan look on.

Scotland team woke to the battering of sheets of rain on their hotel windows. Many of the players spent the morning watching the Oxford-Cambridge boat race on the Thames.

Alex James and Alex Jackson even found time to pop in on the England hotel to turn the tables on Dixie Dean. "Bet you 10 bob I score first", bellowed James. "Make it a treble stake for a hat-trick", added Jackson prophetically.

Not everyone shared the cocky pair's optimism. "We're on our knees and we know it" was the comment from one doom-laden Scottish newspaper.

In front of the future King George VI and the royal family of Afghanistan, both teams made their way on to the pitch to the roars of the 80,682 fans who had paid the two shillings admission (10p) – plus hundreds of canny Scots who had scrambled over the stadium's walls.

The linesmen were the SFA's J.L. Morrison and a Watford teacher, Stanley Rous, who was later to become FA secretary, the head of FIFA and a knight of the realm.

The rain-drenched surface had the consistency of a slab of butter. The big and heavy English players were, almost literally, stuck in the mud.

Yet the tiny Scots forwards, with Alex Jackson the tallest at 5ft 7ins, zipped about with the speed and elegance of champion skaters.

Perhaps the most poised performer on the day was the Rangers winger Alan Morton, who helped his near-perfect balance by

having only three studs on each boot. He claimed four would stick in the turf on a quick turn.

From the first toot of referee Bell's whistle, Scotland were on the defensive – for all of a minute. Young Harkness was so nervous, he had to hold on to a goalpost to stop himself falling over. Immediately, he was called into action as Billy Smith fired in a shot from 10 yards, but Jack parried it on to the post. The next time an England player touched the ball, it was to pick it out of the net.

Within seconds, the ball had been manoeuvred to the other end of the pitch, where Morton crossed for Jackson to head home. A minute from half-time, James shot home the second goal from 20 yards. If the first half was a contest, the second was a slaughter. For a second time, Jackson rose to meet a Morton cross and nodded it home. Within a minute it was 4-0, as Alex James crashed in a loose ball.

Scots fans were in ecstasy. Five minutes from the end they were in heaven as Jackson hit his third goal from close range, again following a perfectly-weighted cross from Morton. England's only goal, from Kelly in 89 minutes, was hardly a consolation as they were mercilessly taunted and teased throughout.

In its analysis, The Times opined: "Scotland, by over-indulgence in the pleasant pastime of making the English defence look supremely silly, cheated themselves out of a sixth and possibly seventh goal."

As the final whistle blew, the

playing field was transformed by surreal and uproarious scenes of celebration. Jack Harkness grabbed the "Wee McGregor" matchball, stuffed it up his jersey and waddled off towards the dressing rooms.

Meanwhile, hundreds of delirious Scottish fans invaded the pitch to dance jigs and throw tam o'shanters in the air while the band of the Irish Guards dutifully tried to play the national anthem of Afghanistan.

Afterwards, the match fees – ranging from £6 to £10 – were paid to members of the victorious team, except for Jack Harkness. The amateur from Queen's Park was given an inscribed silver medal, which today is almost priceless.

Jack went on to earn cash with Hearts, followed by a long career as a sportswriter.

Other players from that team

seemed cursed with ill luck. Hughie Gallacher couldn't even enjoy the after-match dinner, having to rush home after learning that his sister-in-law had died. Beset by financial and family disasters, he eventually ended his life by throwing himself in front of a Scotland-bound train in 1957.

Hat-trick hero Jackson later rowed with Chelsea about his £8 weekly wage. After being branded a troublemaker, Alex quit top-class football at 27. He played as a freelance in the lower leagues, but died in a road accident in Egypt in 1946. Our other goal hero, Alex James, who was transferred to Arsenal for a British record fee of £8,750, died of cancer aged just 51.

One remnant of the game came from the mouth of an exasperated English supporter. As 5ft 4in Alan Morton taunted his team, the fan shouted: "You wee blue devil". The tag stuck. Morton, a rich businessman, won 35 caps and was a Rangers director for 38 years.

Sadly, the only film record made during the game was a Pathe News clip, which hardly did justice to such a momentous occasion.

It was 90 minutes to savour. A day when England were truly humiliated. They have never been beaten so comprehensively since.

The English awakened the next day, April 1, hoping it was a joke.

It wasn't. Yet that very day, every Scots fan had a smile as wide as Hadrian's Wall. ■



■ A ticket to the stand cost just five shillings – that's 25p in today's money

Where the Vikings were sent home to think again



■ The mural in the National Portrait Gallery, depicting the Battle of Largs.



**Biker
historian
David R
Ross
revisits
1263 and
all that**

Unlike their counterparts in England, most of whom are buried within Westminster Abbey, most of the royals of Scotland since the time of Iona are scattered in graves all over the face of the land.

William the Lion's son, Alexander II, died on the island of Kerrera, near Oban, while preparing to quell unrest in the Hebrides. He took ill aboard his ship, anchored in Horse-shoe Bay, and was carried ashore and died at a spot still known as Dalrigh or 'The King's Field'.

Alexander II must have had a liking for Melrose Abbey, for great efforts were made to transport his body right across Scotland to be interred beneath the high altar there.

His son, Alexander III, had a long and prosperous reign. Many coins survive from this period showing that, economically, things were going well in Scotland.

More mints for the production of coinage existed in Alexander's time than at any other era in Scotland's history. Eighteen different mints have been identified from the inscriptions on coins, and these include such diverse sites as Inverness, Renfrew, Berwick, Ayr, Roxburgh, Perth and Montrose.

Alexander III's main claim to fame, however, was his victory in the Battle

of Largs in 1263 – when he grasped control of the Hebrides from the Norsemen in what was in reality little more than a major skirmish. Its impact has reverberated down the ages, however, as a significant turning point in Scotland's history.

Lest we forget, Edinburgh's National Portrait Gallery has a large painting on a wall at first-floor level, depicting a scene from the historic fight.

The Viking fleet had suffered much damage due to heavy storms before the battle, and that – coupled with some skilful delaying tactics on the part of Alexander III – meant that the Viking longships were compelled to make a landing at Largs with only a part of their whole strength.

The battle, resulting in a complete victory for the Scots, effectively put an end to Norse claims of sovereignty over not only the Western Isles of Scotland but much of the coast of the western mainland, where the dragon-prowed longships held sway.

The site of this battle can be visited, and is marked by a large monument known fondly as 'The Pencil' (which does indeed look like a giant upright pencil) at the southern end of Largs, on the seashore, a little north of the modern marina.

There was a mound or two tumulus in Largs known locally as either 'Margaret's Law' or 'Hakon's Tomb',

which consisted of a large flat stone supported by two others.

It was opened in 1780 and found to contain five stone coffins holding skulls and other bones, while many human bones and funeral urns were found above and around the coffins.

From this discovery it was immediately concluded that this was the burial place of many of the slain from the battle.

But there was no glorious death for this man of such a heroic feat that we Scots still talk about with pride today.

Like so many Kings of Scots, Alexander met an untimely end. He broke his neck in a fall after his horse stumbled while he rode along the sands near Kinghorn, in Fife, on a dark and stormy night.

A monument in the shape of a Celtic cross marks the spot where Alexander's body was found. This stands beside the A92 coast road between Burntisland and Kinghorn, overlooking the sands of Pettycur Bay.

Unlike his father's final journey, Alexander III did not have to travel much further after his demise – he was buried in Dunfermline Abbey. But even he would be surprised at how much his death would change his kingdom.

Edward Longshanks of England was waiting in the wings and saw his chance. The War of Independence was about to begin. ●

Scotland's Story

Anderston Quay, Glasgow, G3 8DA

Telephone: 0141-242-1493

e-mail: scotlandstory@sundaymail.co.uk

Website Address: www.scotlands-story.co.uk

Consultants

Professor Edward J Cowan, Head of Scottish History, University of Glasgow;

Professor Christopher Whatley, Head of History, University of Dundee.

Ian Nimmo, chairman.

Editor Alex MacLeod

Managing editor John Scott

Assistant editor Mark Jardine Design Samantha Ramsay

Chief sub-editor Richard Wilson

Picture editor Naomi Small

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Tel: 0141 242 1400

Editor-in-Chief Iain King

Senior editor Austin Barrett

Consultant Hugh Currie

Group Advertising Sales Manager

Suzie Cairns Tel: 0141 242 1444

Circulation and Marketing Director

Fred Governo

Circulation Manager Rita Nimmo

Production Manager Helen Sullivan

Financial Controller Jonathan Platt

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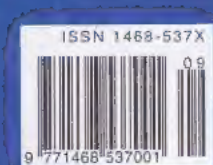
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